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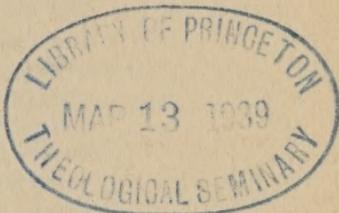
The Christian faith in a day
of crisis

THE CHRISTIAN FAITH IN A DAY OF CRISIS

by

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BY THE AUTHOR

THE SPIRIT CHRISTLIKE, 1904
JESUS AND THE PROPHETS, 1905
THE INFINITE AFFECTION, 1907
SPIRITUAL CULTURE AND SOCIAL SERVICE, 1912
CHRISTIAN SERVICE AND THE MODERN WORLD, 1915
THE GREAT PHYSICIAN, 1915
THE PROGRESS OF CHURCH FEDERATION, 1922
INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN MOVEMENTS, 1924
CHRISTIAN UNITY IN PRACTICE AND PROPHECY, 1933
THE NEW CHURCH AND THE NEW GERMANY, 1934
CHAOS IN MEXICO, 1935
CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIAN THOUGHT, 1936
ACROSS THE YEARS: AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY, 1936
TRENDS OF CHRISTIAN THINKING, 1937
STEPS TOWARD THE WORLD COUNCIL, 1938
THE CHRISTIAN FAITH IN A DAY OF CRISIS, 1939

VOLUMES TRANSLATED

A l'Image du Christ, M. and Mme. Jean Morin, 1922
La Culture Spirituelle, Mlle. Hélène Chèradame, 1922
Die internationalen Christlichen Bewegungen: Amerikanisch Gesehen, Adolf Keller, 1925

*EDITED AND WRITTEN IN
COLLABORATION WITH OTHERS*

THE OLD PURITANISM AND THE NEW AGE, 1903
THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY AND THE SOCIAL ORDER, 1909
CHRISTIAN UNITY AT WORK, 1913
THE CHURCHES OF THE FEDERAL COUNCIL, 1916
THE LIBRARY OF CHRISTIAN COOPERATION, 1917, 6 volumes
THE CHURCHES OF CHRIST IN TIME OF WAR, 1917

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London: 21 Paternoster Square

FOREWORD

When the publishers informed the author that the last volume of this series¹ was out of print it seemed wiser, in view of the unusual output of the year in theology, to prepare a current volume rather than to print a new edition of the preceding one.

The often over-burdened pastor, it is assumed, needs and desires to follow the thought of more books than he can read and it is for him, in the main, that this series is published.

The volumes herein reviewed were selected mainly from over three hundred that the writer was called upon to read as a member of the selection committee of the American Library Association for the purpose of recommending the fifty best books of the current year. At the same time the choice has in some cases been made because the book under consideration was called for in the interest of comprehensiveness in this volume.

I am indebted to my wife, Genevieve Dayton Macfarland, for her assistance in literary revision, in preparing the manuscript for the press, in reading the proof and in compiling the index.

February, 1939

C. S. M.

¹ *Trends of Christian Thinking 1937.*

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I

INTRODUCTION

While I was making a study of the religious and political situation in Germany in 1933, in a conversation with Karl Barth, he handed me, fresh from the press, his *Theologische Existenz heute*, as the summation of his views. Barth is at his argumentative best in dealing with a concrete situation and this document perhaps, if not probably, did more towards initiating the consolidation of the "Confessional Church" protagonists for the freedom of the Gospel than any other influence. In it he took issue with both the "German Christians" and the "Young Reformation Movement" which opposed them. It was a fundamental fallacy for both to presuppose that the *führer* principle in the state in any way implied the adaptation of any such theory to the Church. The Christian Church knows neither an Aryan nor any other race. Still further, the Church does not exist for the sake of men or of the German people; it exists for the *German Evangelical* people. If the Church excludes Jewish Christians it ceases to be a Christian Church. He concludes with this warning for that hour: *Darum kann die Kirche, kann die Theologie auch im totalen Staat keinen Winterschlaf antreten, kein Moratorium und auch keine Gleichschaltung sich gefallen lassen.*

The fundamental principle underlying these excerpts and the entire message is in these words: *Unsere theologische Existenz ist unsere Existenz in der Kirche.*¹

¹ The issues of that early moment in the struggle of Church and State will be clarified by the reading of Barth's message and

One may not agree with Barth's seeming implication that theology, in his developed sense of the term, has its sole or main condition in the existence of the Church, but it will be made clear in this volume that the crisis, or crises, of our day have forced Christian thinkers to seek the reconstruction or repair or restoration of the theology of the Church. In the title the author has used the term "faith," rather than theology, not because he himself conceives of "faith" in terms of its intellectual formulation and expression, but because that is the word used by most of the theological writers under review, by the World Conference on Faith and Order and by the organization meeting of the World Council of Churches at Utrecht in 1938, the latter of which employed a purely metaphysical concept as being, by implication, the substance of "faith." Indeed, as will be seen, some of the writers under consideration use the capitalized term "Faith" for philosophy, theology and dogma. And herein lies the cause of some of the confusion in the thought of the day. Whether or not we agree with my colleague, Shailer Mathews, that "the effort to find a creedal basis for . . . unity is anachronistic,"² there is at least obvious disadvantage in identifying faith with dogma. In the two previous volumes of the series³ I described the thinking of several disillusioned writers who seemed to be running hastily to cover, without too much regard for what the shelter might involve. It seemed to be "any port in time of storm." It looked as though, in 1935 and 1936,

that of his German Christian opponent, Emmanuel Hirsch of Göttingen; see *The New Church and the New Germany*, Charles S. Macfarland, Macmillan, 1934; pages 113-118 and pages 83-84.

² *The Church and the Christian*, Shailer Mathews, Macmillan, 1938.

³ *Contemporary Christian Thought* 1936.
Trends of Christian Thinking 1937.

in Continental Europe and to some extent in America, there might be a sweeping tide of Barthianism so-called and certainly of near-Barthianism. This was partly because Karl Barth had given voice to neglected fundamental truths of theology, but also because Barth, while telling men that they must listen to God, spoke with such power and positiveness and so perpetually that he drowned out other quieter voices.⁴

It was not enough to condemn a wicked and perverse generation by preaching on God, Sin, Judgment and Redemption. First of all, a scapegoat was chosen in what was variously called "Liberalism," "Modernism" and "Social Christianity," and the Church was condemned because it had conformed to science, culture and the "world" in general. A new-old theology must be found. Continental theologians offered what seemed to be one and there were signs of its ready acceptance.

More recently, however, we have indications of more steadiness and balance, as other voices, less strident, but more penetrating, have been heard. In the meantime, as the result, some of the younger writers of three or four years ago have produced later studies, explaining earlier positions in such manner as to modify them. There is probably less of the "dialectical" theology in America to-day than there was three years ago. Contemporary thinkers and writers who had yielded to the persuasiveness of Barth and his associates have witnessed the divisions between Barth and his one-time followers. Barth himself has diverged from his mentor, Kierkegaard, and indeed from himself. Such is always the issue of the dialectical mode and method of thought. Dialectics tend to be self-modifying when not self-destructive.

⁴ The author's analysis of Barth's *Credo* is in *Trends of Christian Thinking*, 1937.

We are, however, still in a period of transition in which men are seeking the theological formulation of what they term "*a* faith." There are signs of a re-nascence of philosophy. A new generation of thinkers is developing. The wiser among them are not attaching themselves to a theological leader and are not seeking a Munich peace at any price, to be paid to a new Continental authoritarianism in theology.

In their attempt to apprehend the moral order of the universe, they are finding the response of the divine love. "It is the witness of the soul of man upon whom God has placed His own image. It is perfectly expressed to humanity in Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit is its interpreter. Jesus spoke of the affection of the intellect. Man must *love* God with the mind. In the life of religion the knowledge of the truth and the affection of consecrated devotion are thus by God joined together and may not by man be put asunder. Religion is both thought and feeling. Only an artificial distinction separates the two. Theology is an eternally enduring science. Religion, without it, is like

'An infant crying in the night:
An infant crying for the light:
And with no language but a cry.'

"The deification of law and nature is neither religion nor theology. Over against nature a God can have neither beginning nor end. He is the infinite subject of which the congregation of objects in nature is one expression. Nature is an organism of intelligible things. God is the eternal intellect Himself. While there cannot be antagonism between the two, antithesis there must be. No one can bow in reverence to a nature below him or to an *idea* within him. Religion, therefore, in its soul, is reverence and homage to a supreme Mind and Will. To such a Being there cannot fail to

be a pathway from the sensitive, the intellectual and the moral highways of human life. Conscience may act as human before it is *discovered* to be divine. It does not reach its height until the discovery is made.

“In both worshipper and worshipped there must be the same conscious moral order; one, the infinite archetype, the other, the finite image, susceptible to appeal and capable of response. The moral consciousness of man brings us face to face with the profound and momentous questions as to whether its sovereign intimations are verifiable and its relations eternal. Ethics inevitably perfect themselves in religion or degrade themselves into some lurking form of hedonism. The life of duty must become the life of an enlightened affection. This moral relation between man and God needs to be adjusted to the order of the universe. Impersonal impulse must become personal affection and intelligent conviction.

“The deeper man’s religious experience becomes in the realm of the temporal, the profounder is his earnest interest in the eternal, as ‘deep calleth unto deep.’ Thus, in this larger sense of the words,

‘Belief or Unbelief
Bears upon life, determines its whole course.’ ”⁵

The studies in this volume are efforts to reveal, or, perhaps better, to suggest, some processes of thought, witnesses of revelation, and some means by which the mutual relations between God, man and the moral order may be gained, intensified, witnessed and apprehended.

The reader will be able, to no inconsiderable degree, to make his own synthesis, even though “philosophical theory has not yet thrown sufficient light on the social

⁵ From *The Infinite Affection*, by Charles S. Macfarland. The Pilgrim Press, 1907.

content of knowledge, on the intellectual ties which unite men and make their mutual comprehension possible," and even though "there is no essential affinity between revelation and knowledge, since the former contains no cognitive element."⁶ The simple-minded Christian can feel and see what the fundamental sources of his faith are. Beyond this, if there is any appreciable validity in Berdyaev's epistemology and his philosophy of philosophy, we shall always, no matter what the World Conference on Faith and Order may elucidate, be far from having any philosophy, theology or "Faith" that will meet the requirements of the ancient formula and be accepted completely, by all, everywhere.

However, in this study, as in those previously printed, the author has not sought to present his own conclusions. He seeks rather to tell what these writers are thinking and saying, although the occasional impulse to make parenthetical observation has at some points been irresistible. If so great a mind as Nicolas Berdyaev can reach the conclusion that "truth implies, above all, man's spiritual activity" and that "its apprehension depends on the degree of community between men and their communion in the spirit,"⁷ we need not despair because our minds alone fail to express the inexpressible. And if William Adams Brown's proposal⁸ should be put into effect, theology would ever be something to be explored, as a comprehensive principle in the search for all knowledge. Thus, perhaps, the reader may measurably share my state of mind, as I attempt this study:

"Our little systems have their day;
They have their day and cease to be;
They are but broken lights of thee,
And thou, O Lord, art more than they."

⁶ Nicolas Berdyaev. ⁷ See page 43.

⁸ See page 191 ff.

II

TYPES OF MODERN THEOLOGY

I. A GENERAL SURVEY OF THE FIELD

We may well begin our effort to set our minds in order by a brief survey in *TYPES OF MODERN THEOLOGY*, by Professor Hugh Ross Mackintosh of New College, Edinburgh. Now, as in my student days a half century ago, we may look to Scotland for poise, clarity and judicial treatment of theology.

At first thought, one might wonder whether or not Professor Mackintosh has gone back of the modern age, in the inclusion of Schleiermacher and Ritschl. In his analysis, however, we are reminded that present-day theology is still greatly influenced by these great thinkers, as yet more than by the completely modern Barthian school, which pretty much repudiates them. Therefore, this study gives us a needed comparison between the theological tendencies of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Indeed, the author finds, as a main feature in modern theology, "its swiftness of movement" (illustrated, for example, by the many changes in thought, by Barth, and still more by those of his one-time followers, such as Emil Brunner). While it is roughly true that German theology was "the theological movement of the age" and belonged to Christendom, Dr. Mackintosh doubts that German nineteenth-century speculation always moved "within the limits of authentic Christian faith" and regards Barth's assertion that it "substituted the word of man for the word of God" as "more than

half justified." He describes Schleiermacher as having developed a new phase in theology; "unless the impulses given by him, for good or ill, be studied with some care, the present position and prospects of theology will largely remain mysterious." (I think that this is a needed warning to our younger near-Barthians.)

Dr. Mackintosh's review of the historical development of the theology of the Reformation up to our day gives us the needed background for all the thinking of the present age, even when the latter does not share the earlier "assumption of something very like omniscience in spiritual things," and although "a more than ordinarily hurtful feature in traditional orthodoxy, it can now be seen, was the predominance of Aristotelianism in Christian theology."

The main forces in the eighteenth century were two opposites: Pietism and Rationalism. The former was "a recoil of living faith from a dead and rigid theology," and was "more ethical than theological." Rationalism finally put aside fundamental doctrines—everything that could not be explained to and by reason—and while intending to leave the teaching of Jesus intact, had to do a good deal of eliminating. Under these efforts for *Aufklärung*, "the majesty and power of the Christian Gospel vanished" in "a form of Christianity which, with half a sheet of notepaper and a spare hour, the average man can construct for himself."

A new outburst of philosophical Idealism came under Kant, Fichte, Schelling and Hegel, with Kant in the prior place, although it is quite inaccurate to call him, as some writers have done, "the philosopher of Protestantism." While his was the last word of the *Aufklärung*, his philosophy was forward looking, and

contributed guidance to the different era that followed. Fichte carried "ethical activism to its limit." Following Schelling's effort to combine pantheism and theism, Hegel, with vastly greater speculative power, elaborated "ideas struck out by Schelling in hours of intuitive vision."

In, for the most part, clear analysis and comparison, Professor Mackintosh interprets Schleiermacher's "theology of feeling." He was both scientific thinker and passionate in religion. His was the Romantic or emotional view of religion, which he isolates from all other human activities. He finds revelation in Nature, the Individual, Humanity and in History. Dr. Mackintosh tells us the obvious when he says that Schleiermacher "reached his definition of religion by analysis of his own experiences." Great as were and are his influence and gifts, he "saw the movement of God's finger, but His face as yet he had not seen. He felt for the hem of His garment, as it swept through the immensities of time and space; of such things he spoke movingly; but regarding the infinite Holiness and Love disclosed in Christ he had thus far maintained a nearly complete silence." One wonders at the tendency among some modern German and other Continental theologians to disparage Schleiermacher, in view of this author's estimate of him (which the reviewer shares) as a systematic thinker. "In stressing the fundamental importance of felt dependence, as a factor in religion, Schleiermacher did not err." (One often wonders, therefore, at Barth's almost contempt for Schleiermacher.) To him "the religious man knows himself to be a receiver only, God the Doer and Giver."

The reviewer feels that Mackintosh loses something from sight in Schleiermacher, in his criticism of the latter's statement that "Christian doctrines" "are ac-

counts of the Christian religious affections set forth in speech." He is probably correct, however, when he characterizes Schleiermacher as failing "to perceive the vital place held by belief in the religious response as such," but the reviewer can hardly accept the view that "doctrine is for him a statement about our feeling, not about God." (But I must go on with Mackintosh and not with my own view of Schleiermacher.) Dr. Mackintosh finds Schleiermacher's "initial error" due to "a weak sense of revelation, as the evoking cause of faith and *ipso facto* the criterion by which all doctrine is to be tried." He tells us that, in contrast, the Reformers "escaped from the deceptive self-absorption and immanentism of the essential mystic, whose experience moves only within itself."

As a summary of Schleiermacher's cardinal Christian finality of the Christian religion, it depends on whether we listen to him as philosopher or as theologian. This is due to his cultural evolutionism and his half-mystical conception of religion. On the Church he lays "wholesome stress." Christianity is creative of "a corporate life."

As a summary of Schleiermacher's cardinal Christian doctrines, we have: The Christian consciousness; a doctrine of sin which is hard to reconcile with his initial assertion of an all-embracing Divine causality (a problem equally that of Karl Barth on the same subject); a Christology which includes the moral perfection of Jesus; and a conception of Prayer which has a "pantheistic flavour." Schleiermacher's ambiguity makes it difficult to answer the question as to how far his system of doctrine is "on truly Christian lines." "It is only in a relative sense," "that we can speak of the *Dogmatic* of Schleiermacher as an authentically Christian book." Finally, "his work will long remain

to bewilder and instruct. But more and more it will impress rather by its contrast than by its likeness to the faith of the Prophets and Apostles."

Hegel is the representative of "the theology of speculative rationalism," in strong contrast to Schleiermacher; the pendulum swings. The reviewer finds himself in hearty accord with the author's assertion that "no one has ever been quite sure what Hegel believed about God." It may be described as "pantheistic Monism or logical Evolutionism." He sought to keep on amicable terms with Christianity, but his supreme court of appeal is philosophy, discovered by speculation. Jesus finds place in his "great men."

Hegel's defence of a spiritual interpretation of the world has elements of high value. His insistence "on the truth that God and man are not wholly disparate natures" is modified by his definitions of the two natures as "a series of attributes which contradict each other point by point." Reason is the common point of identification and there is no place in Hegelianism for Barth's "confrontation of the Holy God with the guilty creature." Dr. Mackintosh concludes that "the Hegelian interpretation of the Christian religion leaves us with a deeper conviction than ever of the impotence of man to force his way through to the presence of God by the power of speculative reason."

Dr. Mackintosh seems to regard the negative theologies or philosophies of Strauss and Feuerbach as a natural issue from Hegelianism. "Strauss roundly declares that he is more sure of Hegelianism than of anything else and that Hegel forbids him to give Jesus Christ the unique place He occupies for faith." (This is just about the way too many of our younger thinkers are following contemporary leaders.) Strauss sought to destroy Christianity, while his contemporary, Feuer-

bach, tried to uproot religion altogether—by “unmasking Hegelianism”—although he started out as a pupil of Hegel.

We are introduced to one great personality whose name has largely passed out of the ordinary theological *Who's Who*. Dr. Mackintosh regards Biedermann as one of the greatest of divines of the nineteenth century. With him “God may be personal, or, on the other hand, absolute and infinite; He cannot be both.” Dorner took up the challenge of Strauss. He found the moral revelation of God in Christ.

In conclusion, our author seeks to appraise the result of the effort to state the Gospel in the intellectual terms of Hegelian Gnosticism. To Hegel and his disciples “God is Mind in general without being a Mind.” “This depersonalized Absolute” results from “a metaphysical temper that finds it natural either to overlook or to misapprehend the sorest troubles of *sinful men*.”

Next we come to a theologian familiar enough to us all. Who among us does not acknowledge what he owes to, or at least has received from, Albrecht Ritschl? Who, as student forty years ago, did not find in him the needed supplement to Schleiermacher, a relief from the barrenness of Hegel and the profundity of Dorner? The reviewer hardly needs to give Mackintosh's estimate—we have our own. But for the sake of the newer generation we may give some of the high points.

Of course, we all know that in his absorption as a scientific *theologian*, he went too far in trying to cut theology off from metaphysics. He failed to make needed distinctions in forms of mysticism. He does not start from a “Christian consciousness,” but from a Gospel. He treats religion as a practical way of life, not as a subject for speculative thought. God and Christ are known, in their natures, by their values—

their worth for us men, based on historical realities. "We shall best understand Christ's Person by understanding what He has done for men." He does a work which only God could do. Therefore Ritschl sees no value in or evidence for such a doctrine as that of pre-existence.

Who will not agree with Dr. Mackintosh, that to Ritschl is due to-day the discernment of our Lord "through the medium of His actually redeeming influence?" Does not the modern enfeebled Church need his sense of its mediating responsibility? The reviewer cannot accept Mackintosh's view that Ritschl's academic successor, Karl Barth, "is definitely a more Christian thinker than Ritschl." He does agree that "the two theologians (granted that Barth is a theologian) are much nearer together than has often been supposed."

To be sure, those who, like the reviewer, still keep their seats as Ritschl's pupils, can see the limitations of what Dr. Mackintosh too strongly terms his "rationalistic moralism." We can modify his "historical positivism." We may agree that he did little more than open up the problem of Revelation and History. Certain of his pupils blazed wider the trail of the pioneer. But Mackintosh is surely correct in his view that, for breadth and vigour, no theologian approached Ritschl during the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

But once more the pendulum swings. The reaction against Ritschl appears in "the theology of scientific religious history," and a new school grew up in Germany whose leader was Ernst Troeltsch. This writer undertook to complete the task that Schleiermacher had left undone, or half done. In both these minds we find a fusion of empiricism and idealism. Troeltsch re-

acted against the dualism of Ritschl between faith and reason. He re-pursued the way of religious history and found a general evolution which led to the self-revelation of God, such as the Bible did not attest. At some points Troeltsch fell behind Schleiermacher in the approach to positive Christian faith. Christianity was not a universally valid religion. All religion lies in "a profound inner experience," such as could not be universally shared. Troeltsch's view would exclude any vigorous type of missionary faith. He was one among the many who, disillusioned by the great war, lost much of their earlier approach to Christian faith.

We come now to the more modern "theology of paradox" whose leader, Søren Kierkegaard, was to some degree a precursor of Karl Barth. Professor Mackintosh recognizes this writer's subjectivity, but to much less a degree than the reviewer could do. Kierkegaard finds three levels on which men live, the æsthetic, the ethical and the religious. Religion "is not itself morality in any sense"; "our best needs the Divine pardon no less than our worst." There is an absolute dualism between God and man. God is "the absolutely unknown," "the sheerly unqualified Being." "Man sins just because he is a *sinner*." These conceptions form the paradox of man's relation to God. In his Christology he finds a paradox in Jesus' two natures. Kierkegaard, although believing that the world is the good creation of a loving God, is himself paradoxical in his growing sympathy with Schopenhauer. Likewise, although taking a low view of man, he was paradoxically self-confident. His theology was "a corrective to things as they are." He lost view of the movements of God in history. Within his own mind he was a paradox, holding two antagonistic conceptions of God.

The volume closes with "the theology of the Word of God," as expounded by Karl Barth. The theology of Barth (and this the reviewer feels is its saving quality) is "never a closed system." Revelation to man comes only when he is conscious "of standing at the bar of God"—as a sinner, not as a being of aspiration. There is no such thing, in truth, as a valid "word of man." Barth casts out Schleiermacher altogether. But his changes of view are illustrated by his announcement that what he and others once regarded as his fundamental work, on the Epistle to the Romans, cannot longer be taken "as an authoritative source of his theology." Still, his Dogmatic is the issue of his exegesis. (The reviewer has felt the latter to be one of his weakest points.)

Revelation took place in Jesus Christ and still does. Barth gives no place to any "Natural Revelation." His paradoxical technique is revealed in the seeming contradiction between the *Deus absconditus* and the *Deus revelatus*. On the one hand, Barth often seems to regard the Church as hopelessly lost, but his "final estimate of the Church has all the gravity and all the grandeur of Reformation thought."

Professor Mackintosh, while in the main an apologist for Barth, recognizes that his writing is often temperamental (and the reviewer would add, largely subjective). "We owe to him . . . the most serious theological effort of this generation." He is beyond any other thinker in facing the menace of Humanism. His theology is "of incalculable import for the Church of our time." And the reviewer, while a humble and inadequate critic of Barth, joins in the prayer of Dr. Mackintosh "that the time for completion should be given him." At the same time, the reviewer hopes that

Barth may, with advancing years, become more intellectually humble.

As a study in the history of near-modern and contemporary theology, this volume is of the highest value. While it shows that "our little systems" "have their day and cease to be," it also reveals the ways in which succeeding thinkers correct and complement one another, and make necessary for all of us the study of the history of theology, which modern preachers so often neglect in their adherence to the passing systems (if there really are any systems) of contemporary thought.

2. THE CONTINENTAL EUROPEAN SCENE

This situation is of especial import because on the Continent much of the thinking of contemporary theologians identifies the conflict between the "world" and the Church with the implications of theology, in accord with Barth's message to the German Evangelical Church.

Following his similar study of English theology¹ Professor Walter M. Horton, in *CONTEMPORARY CONTINENTAL THEOLOGY*, presents a very different picture in his survey of the current theological thinking of the Continent. It is kaleidoscopic because that is just what the scene presents.

Whatever else one may say of it, Dr. Horton believes that it "will tend to deepen, correct and steady our faith at the point where we face . . . the mystery of human destiny." He finds also recent evidences of a lessening of the division between Anglo-Saxon and Continental thinking, in a modification of the "'activism'" of the former and the "'quietism'" of the

¹ See *Trends of Christian Thinking*, 1937.

latter. While he is as far as ever from being a Barthian, he finds taking general form "*a theology of crisis*." We are not to regard Barthianism as a summing up of Continental theology, but there is in the latter "a 'fourth dimension' barely suspected in our neat, orderly, three-dimensioned world"; a dimension "full of terror as well as glory." It is to present this that the volume is intended.

Professor Horton describes the dissolution of the "ancient barrier" between the Eastern Orthodox and the Catholic and Protestant Churches of Western Europe. In the former, represented by Berdyaev and Bulgakov, there has been a new development of the ethical, social aspects of faith. There is a veritable cult of Dostovievsy. "Eastern Orthodoxy to-day is not anti-liberal." "It presents to disillusioned American idealists the possibility of deepening and correcting their faith without denying it."

There is a revival of Catholic theology, with "new authority," a new Modernist movement. We find a Catholic Christian philosophy, "maintaining a philosophy of nature while at the same time building up a theology of super-nature and integrating the first with the second in a coherent system." Theological debate ranges much around the metaphysics of St. Thomas Aquinas. Dr. Horton finds Catholic *philosophy* superior to Eastern Orthodox "and indeed to most contemporary philosophy, in sobriety and balance," but considers Eastern Orthodox *theology* "much more helpful than Roman Catholic."

Turning to Protestantism, the most striking feature in Germany is "the almost complete collapse of liberal Protestantism." Schleiermacher, Ritschl and Troeltsch are in "profound disrepute," although Dr. Horton (the reviewer is glad to say) prophesies that "their works

will be studied hundreds of years hence." Contemporary German philosophy is much influenced by "‘existential thinking,’" the classic term used by Kierkegaard, which, in contrast to "‘abstract speculation,’" forces itself on man in critical and crucial moments in his life.

A chief and immediate cause of the collapse of liberalism is historical: the failure of democratic government in Germany and the rise of the totalitarian state. The Church was a prey to this force because the German people were already alienated from the Church. At the moment we have the "‘German Christians’" seeking to Nazify the Church; the "‘Confessional Church’" standing for the historic confessions, and the "‘Faith movement,’" a religion of humanistic heroism and honour, and of race and blood pure and simple.

Professor Horton describes the dialectical crisis theology of Barth which "not only threatens to turn all religious faith into an irrational leap in the dark," but also "to destroy that principle of order in the universe on which all natural knowledge, including science itself, is based." Meanwhile Barth's one-time associates, Gogarten and Brunner, have moved "toward the German Christian position" (which the reviewer suspects they would deny). They moved away from the Barthian theology because of its lack of "any adequate grounding in *ethics*, especially *social ethics*."

Dr. Horton reveals his effort to be sympathetically discriminating in his analysis even of Rosenberg's volume on the supremacy of race and blood and on the philosophies of Hauer and Hirsch and the latter's "new Law and Prophets of the German Third Reich." Heim and Althaus are "mediating theologians" in this *chiaroscuro* of German philosophy, theology and ethics.

Scandinavian theology maintains some of the "schol-

arly discursiveness and serenity" of German thinking before the War, but beneath the surface there is no little unrest. The Church of Sweden has begun to supersede the Anglican as "the real 'bridge Church' between Catholicism and Protestantism," by "showing a 'middle way.'" As in Germany, but in a very different set of forms, there are in the Scandinavian Churches differing schools of theological thinking.

Holland has been and is "characterized by a multitude of sectarian divisions." There has been and is an "extreme contemporary" conservatism, largely in reaction to the opposite swing of Dutch Modernism.

Strangely enough, Karl Barth, "a devoted Calvinist," has few followers in Calvin's native France. But there have been, during the past decade and more, great changes in Protestant theology. To-day the Strasbourg theology has preserved "an irreducible minimum of liberalism," while the Paris students of theology are "growing more and more vehemently orthodox." On the whole, the trend in France is away from liberalism.

Passing to Central Europe, in Czechoslovakia, "the ideals of the American and French revolutions" struck deep, with nearly all the results to be expected revealed in the great statesman and thinker, President Masaryk, whom the author terms "the last great leader of liberal humanitarianism." (One asks now, for how long?)

In conclusion, Professor Horton finds no such thing as a single "Continental theology," and any conception of "contemporary Continental theology" should include Catholic and Eastern Orthodox. What this theology "lacks in *balance* it makes up in *depth*." It has a quality which the author terms "*the sense of an extra dimension*." There is *the dimension of depth in the Bible; in the soul of man; in the mystery of iniquity; the cosmic dimension of depth in the work of*

Christ; the dimension of depth in the Church and the State; and in the mystery of the future.

The Anglo-Saxon world is found clutching "convulsively after the slipping idea of inevitable progress," or replacing that idea "with the Platonic hope of a timeless eternity." If we are not to abandon our "'activism'" for Continental "'quietism,'" we must look, with Holmstroem, "'both upward to eternity and ahead in time'—this must be the double direction of our religious aspirations if we are to have the *tempered optimism* and the *patient activism*, which our hard times require." We need not abandon all liberalism, but only "'disciplined democracy,' as the Czechs call it, can stand against Fascism." As Dean Inge says, one may be a liberal *Protestant* or a liberal *Catholic*, but he cannot be just a *liberal*. He must be a liberal something. Dr. Horton's study leads him to conclude that "it is only in Catholic circles that liberalism still thrives on the Continent," and he himself has become (as he intimated some time ago in his "Realistic Theology") "a liberal Catholic"—in a form of "'Evangelical Catholicism.'"

Finally, "our (American) theology needs exposure to Continental thought to give it *depth*, and to British thought to give it *balance and wise moderation*." Our liberalism should go back, not to Luther and Calvin, "but to Whitefield and Edwards, Finney and Moody." (One pauses at the possible assumption of a common theology among these evangelists.) At the same time Horton speaks with sympathy of the American tendency "*to look forward rather than back, when facing an emergency*." And when we have passed the contemporary crisis, American theology will have been saved not only by "the effective rear-guard action of the Continentals" and "the stubborn tenacity of the

British, but also by the bold advance-guard action" of Americans, whose "God is a great Adventurer."

This is a sort of tourist view of European thinking, giving one a general understanding, rather than a profound study. And the reviewer would commend it to one of his ministerial readers who wrote him not long ago: "I don't seem to know much, if anything, about many of the foreign theologians to whom you so often refer as so important." Every American minister should read at least one book by each of such theologians as Barth, Brunner, Kierkegaard, Berdyaev, Heim, Maritain, and others, as well as—and perhaps, to some extent, in place of—the better known Niebuhr, Fosdick, and Brown. As for Horton, he is rendering fine service in opening up these fields of thought, with—on the whole—a combination of critical judgment and sympathy. And the best of it is that each of his studies is clearer than the preceding one.

3. CONTEMPORARY GERMAN THEOLOGY

On one occasion, when I spent a quiet day with Rudolf Otto, at the University of Marburg, the noted author of *The Idea of the Holy*² invited me to be one of a group to initiate a unifying gathering of Lutheran and Reformed churchmen at Marburg, an effort which proved abortive. Later, on the occasion of the study in Germany, to which reference has been made, I tried to answer the almost paramount question: Where does the Lutheran Church stand? I was unable to secure a satisfactory response, although not a few outstanding theologians were interviewed. In HERE WE STAND Professor Hermann Sasse of the conservative Uni-

² It was the year preceding the anniversary of the Marburg conference and break between Luther and Zwingli. Otto was at this time urging more emphasis on worship in the German Church.

versity of Erlangen now believes that he gives the answer as to the "nature and character of the Lutheran faith."

First of all, the religious situation in Germany is believed by Dr. Sasse to be a "confessional struggle," a question of doctrines, or teaching. "The Christianity of . . . subjective religious experiences" is either dying or else "veering around to self-deification," the worst kind of paganism. Over against this is a revival of faith, "a new appreciation for doctrines and creeds," which "Protestant Modernism" has never understood.

This struggle will soon become acute in other countries, and even though we may be ridiculed by the world because we cannot agree, "the best thing we can do is to take seriously the doctrinal differences which divide the churches." The author wishes to explain why the Lutheran Church has a "separate existence" and how it differs from others. Dr. Sasse ironically hopes that other churchmen "may not be offended" by him. "But in the Reformation's *sola fide* our Church has been entrusted with a heritage which it must preserve for all Christendom, even for those who still do not understand it to-day." Moreover, "it is quite possible that the history of the Church will demonstrate in the near future that confessional loyalty . . . has contributed more toward true church union than the kind of tolerance which, in the name of brotherly love, has received every type of error with open arms."

Professor Sasse discovers, as did the reviewer in 1933, that there are "contradictory answers" to the question: What does it mean to be a Lutheran? "Matter-of-course" peaceful existence among the churches is drawing to a close in many parts of the world. The development of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Germany "has resulted in its gradual dispossession from

wide areas" and the "real Lutheran Church" has ceased to exist in the largest section of Protestant Germany. To-day the Augsburg Confession is not mentioned in the constitution of the "German Evangelical Church" of the moment. "One of the great questions at stake . . . is whether, and in what form, the Evangelical Lutheran Church can continue to exist in Germany." "The State does not want outspoken confessional churches." Therefore, the nature of the Lutheran Church has become an interest, not only of churchmen, but of statesmen and sociologists.

As to America, "the right of the Lutheran Church to existence" is likely to be questioned by other Christian churches, (rather an amazing prophecy). As church union progresses, the Lutheran churches will be called upon "to explain why they will not give up their independent confessional existence." Dr. Sasse hopes they will have the courage to do it.

The author proceeds to dispel "a number of grave misconceptions of the Reformation." The first is its "heroic interpretation." The Lutheran Church does not worship its founder. A second misconception is the "culture-historical interpretation." While, of course, there was close connection between the Reformation and the revolutionary movements which produced sixteenth century culture, Goethe's definition of it as an act of emancipation is theoretical and doctrinaire. "Luther and Erasmus, the Reformation and Humanism, are irreconcilably opposed to each other." The Reformation was concerned, not with "the future of human civilization," but with "the eternal welfare of the soul." Only by understanding such deep-seated antagonisms can we understand "the peculiar alliance which unites the medieval and the modern world, Catholicism and Enlightenment, against the Reformation." The Lu-

theran doctrine of the "sinner's justification" encounters the same opposition as does Jesus' Gospel, just because it is "an exposition of the Gospel."

It is equally a mistake to give Lutheranism a "nationalistic interpretation." The Reformation was not a Nordic protest for the establishment of a German national Church, although it was "the *greatest* event in German history down to the present day." Nor was it a Germanization of the Church. On the contrary, Luther's words, in the Smalcald Articles, reject the faith of the greatest Germans, almost as though he had had Schleiermacher's works and the views of modern "evangelical" theologians before him. Eckhart, Böhme, Kant, Fichte, Goethe, Schiller, Hegel, Schleiermacher fall under Luther's "categorical judgment." The Lutheran Church has condemned as heresies "some of the oldest and most genuine elements of German piety, that is, of a religiosity which is peculiar to the German man conceived of as a psychological type."

How then explain the Reformation? It was "in the strictest sense of the word" an "Episode in Church History." Here we come to the profound difference between the two "Reformation churches" as to the essential nature of the Reformation. According to Reformed doctrine, reformation is "a renovation of the Church by means of a return to the Holy Scriptures." Lutheranism sees it differently. "The *sola scriptura* is not enough. It must be supplemented by the *sola fide*." "The nature of the Reformation" must be sought in the "particular kind" of return to the Bible. The Church "does not live by morals," nor by "lofty experiences of the divine and an awareness of the mysteries of God. It lives solely by the forgiveness of sins." For the Lutheran Church "the *sola scriptura* is conditioned by the *sola fide*." A real return to the Scriptures

is made possible only by a "new understanding of the Gospel." The Reformation "began with a theological, an exegetical discovery," of what Paul meant by the term "'righteousness of God,'" in Romans 1:17.

While "Lutheran doctrine is not identical with the doctrine of Luther," and although an exposition of Luther's theology has changed, the substance of this doctrine is not altered in any sense. The Evangelical Lutheran Church "professed its adherence to Luther's teaching because it once again found the pure Gospel of Jesus Christ in his interpretation."

The Lutheran Church has been reproached for destroying the unity of the Church. This is another misconception. The Fathers of Lutheranism were ready for concessions. "Every line of the Augsburg Confession records" the "desire for agreement with Rome." And this was ten years after Luther's excommunication. The Lutheran Church cannot be blamed for the division of western Christendom.

As to the Lutheran Confession, "we know that" "it is true, godly and catholic," and it gives Lutheranism "right to existence as an independent church body." On the one hand, she has "made peace with those with whom she should not have made peace," "as well as failed to establish greater peace and unity with those with whom full ecclesiastical fellowship is possible," by refusing altar fellowship among those who subscribe to Lutheran teaching of the Lord's Supper—this is "a sin against God and our fellowmen."

Lutheranism is still further accused of regarding its reformation as "*the Reformation* of the Church" and of claiming to be "*the Church of the Reformation*." "*The Reformation*" is, however, regarded as made up of all the reformers put together. Just what constitutes the Reformation is "a moot question." "We regret"

the controversies of the Confessional Age, but "we know that there is no such thing as a complete apprehension of truth" "and that even a partial apprehension of it" calls for struggle. "The symptoms of truth, to use Kierkegaard's figure, are polemical." It is necessary to distinguish between pure doctrine and heresy.

Professor Sasse proceeds to elucidate the differences and distinctions between the Lutheran and Reformed Churches. Both the tolerance and the narrowness of Lutheranism "are an absolute mystery" to the Reformed churchmen. As to Luther and Zwingli, "it is a violation of historical truth to twist the facts in such a way as to describe the Reformation as originally a unified movement which was later split wide open by Luther's obstinacy." The difference between Lutheran and Reformed and the cause of separation is and was on church doctrine, and the repudiation of Zwingli, Calvin and their churches by the Evangelical Lutheran Church was "a genuine doctrinal decision," a decision for what it regarded as truth against error. In fact, if, in the sixteenth century, the attempt at "an over-hasty and a false union" had been carried out "by means of compromise formulas, the resultant Church would never have outlived the Counter-Reformation."

But are the differences so important as to preclude Church fellowship? First of all, is there no common basic understanding of the Gospel? The answer is that the two differing conceptions of Law and Gospel "stand side by side at first, like two railroad tracks that lie next to each other and seem to be headed toward the same place, until it turns out later that they are going in two entirely different directions." "As soon as the Gospel is no longer understood exclusively as the gracious promise of the forgiveness of sin for Christ's sake, the concept of faith is altered." What a juxta-

position of Law and Gospel leads to is amply illustrated in church history. "The obedience to moral law, which the German rationalists put 'on the same footing' alongside their faith in God, ended in atheism and ethical nihilism." "Nor is it a secret any longer as to where the 'Social Gospel' (which is an offspring of the Calvinistic interpretation of the Gospel and of faith) and belief in the 'Social Gospel' will lead." Lutheran theology is also distinct from Reformed in the conception of the Church. The doctrine of Predestination calls for a distinction between the "*visible*" and "*invisible*" Church, which Lutheranism rejects.

"If, in consequence of the different conceptions of the Church the Lutheran and Reformed look upon the marks of the Church differently, it is not surprising that they should also differ as to what these marks themselves are." Here is a genuine doctrinal conflict. Lutheran theology rejects "unconditionally and uncompromisingly" Reformed teaching concerning scriptural norms of church polity. Lutherans "do not know" the Christ of Calvinism, Christ the Lawgiver. And for Lutherans, church polity is not mere administration; "*it is a confessional question.*"

On "justification and predestination," the Lutheran idea of God is "utterly different" from the Reformed in the implications of the Incarnation. Still deeper is the difference on the "Incarnation and Real Presence." "The Lutheran Church teaches that, in the Incarnation, God has *really entered* humanity and the infinite has actually *come down into* the finite." This is the meaning of the Gospel in the Lutheran idea of the Lord's Supper. As between the Lutheran and Reformed, the differences are due to the fact that here "two possible, but irreconcilable, interpretations of God's Revelation" are opposed to each other. *Hoc est corpus meum* is

essential to the Lutheran doctrine of the Incarnation. Four hundred years have not settled the colloquy of Marburg.

Of special interest is the author's estimate of Karl Barth, in his discussion of Lutheran doctrine in contrast with Barth's *Modern Reformed Theology*. Professor Sasse is glad to have Barth getting away from the "Heraclitic obscurity" of his "*sic et non*" to a clearer "yea, yea; nay, nay." He does not have a high conception of the thinking qualities of Barth's disciples "in their matter-of-course acceptance of his every change," even when he reverses his view of so fundamental a doctrine as that of the Virgin Birth. Barth is to be explained by his great upsetting of the theological world, and Dr. Sasse believes it probable "that all the evangelical churches will have to repudiate" Barth's "teachings and that he will finish, like many another brilliant theologian before him, by being a sectarian." His fame will be "that of the great conqueror of liberal theology." "Ever since his appearance, modern Protestant theology . . . has become an anachronism." (Professor Sasse's vivid description of this modernism is true of its excesses, but quite untrue of it as held by balanced liberals.)

The irreconcilable difference between Barth and both Lutheran and Reformed theology is on the recognition by the latter of a *revelatio generalis*, which Barth so utterly repudiates. Indeed, the fate of Barthian theology will be decided here. As to the German situation, Barth has "utterly misconstrued it" in considering the "German Christian" movement, which in reality is only a political enterprise, as a serious heresy which is explained by a "*theologica naturalis*."

Barth is basically a Reformed theologian on fundamentals. But his theology is "eclectic and unionistic."

He wavers between Calvinism and Lutheranism, and he has gradually become "a confirmed opponent of confessionalism and an advocate of union" between Lutheran and Reformed. "This is the profound tragedy in Barth's development." Barth has broken with "the living Church." "He does not realize that the problems of the sixteenth century are still living problems." "Whenever the Lord's Supper is taken seriously, the old differences reappear."

The closing chapter, on "The Lutheran Church and the *Una Sancta*," again tells us that Lutheran exclusiveness is "not at all due to confessional separatism and theological obstinacy." It is because agreement with "the Church of the Fathers" is greater than agreement with other churches. It is the Church of "the Gospel" of Jesus Christ. It judges doctrines by the Bible alone. At the same time, it is in harmony with "genuine ecumenical feeling." It recognizes others also as "the Church of God." Does this contradict its refusal of Reformed ecclesiastical fellowship? If so, we find the same contradiction in Luther. It recognizes other churches, but it rejects their errors "with a clear-cut *damnamus*." The unity of the Christian Church can come only when we are all "at one in our understanding" of the Gospel and the Sacraments. "We cannot bring about unity by ceasing to take the search for truth seriously."

Inasmuch as the translation of this exposition is sponsored by the American National Lutheran Council, it is evidently accepted by American Lutheran officials as not misrepresenting them.

The reviewer has given enough of its contents, so that the reader hardly needs to have attention called to the seeming absence from it of intellectual humility, to its "unsupported therefores," and to its over-ingenuity

in explaining contradiction and *non-sequitur*. If Professor Sasse's study is correct, the Lutheran attitude to modern ecumenism is likely to remain little more than "harmony of feeling," although Lutherans participated in the recent conference at Utrecht which prepared a constitution for the World Council of Churches. But, perhaps happily, there are many Lutheran leaders in Europe who do not find as many irreconcilables as he does, as between Lutheran and other intellectual understandings of the Gospel, and who see more of the identities. We will not, however, attempt to decide which has the telescope reversed.

It may be relevant, nevertheless, to recall that Professor Sasse is at Erlangen. History is replete with ironies—Marburg is to-day—or was yesterday—the seat of a certain progressivism. Dr. Sasse has doubtless given us an adequate and accurate analysis of the subject as it is viewed by Lutherans who hold his view. It in no small measure explains the weakness of the German Church—or churches—in their conflict with the state.³ And it also reveals the problem of the newly instituted World Council of Churches.

³ The Erlangen and Marburg faculties divided in their statements on the Jewish issue in 1933. See *The New Church and the New Germany*, Charles S. Macfarland, Macmillan, 1934.

III

A RENASCENCE OF PHILOSOPHY

I. MAN AND THE TRAGIC BURDEN OF HISTORY

"A theologian is in great danger when he speaks in the conceptions of a definite philosophy. He is led off into a realm with which he has nothing to do. There can be no partnership between theology and philosophy. I may philosophize but I will not be taken captive by any philosophy. Dogma is under no bond to justify itself to philosophy. No philosophy can explain Scripture to us."¹

Not so Nicolas Berdyaev, noted Russian exile, who, largely because of his renunciation of the Marxist philosophy for Christianity, has three major predispositions: a renascence of philosophy, a new kind of union between philosophy and theology, and the remedial application of his own philosophy to dispose of the contemporary materialistic philosophies. Berdyaev proposes, in *SOLITUDE AND SOCIETY*, to stem the tide of Barth's disrespect and disruption by his "Existential" philosophy. It is of no little interest that the signs of such a renascence of the one-time partnership of theology and philosophy should come from a Russian philosopher.

Berdyaev finds the philosopher's situation to be "truly tragic in face of the almost universal hostility directed against him." Religion and science are the "avowed enemies" of philosophy, it has "no popular support," and the philosopher never creates the impression that

¹ Free translations from various utterances in the works of Karl Barth.

he is satisfying any social demand. The conflict with religion is "a tragic dilemma," especially when "revelation" is set over against philosophy, because the philosopher "may be prepared to accept revelation." While there is "no essential affinity" between revelation and knowledge, nevertheless "spiritual knowledge is the essence of philosophical knowledge," and while the philosopher's intuition is experimental, "every theology comprehends a philosophy." Philosophy had no sooner released itself from "the shackles of religious dogma," than the philosopher was commanded to subscribe to the dogma of science, which built up a system to replace philosophy. The result has been that both believing and unbelieving philosophies have shared the same tragic fate.

"Intuition is the *sine qua non* of philosophy," which is "based on the maximum experience of human existence." Knowledge itself is the result of the reciprocal action of human culture, Divine Grace and natural necessity.

In the conflict with religion, truth is on the side of religion when philosophy claims to replace religion in the sphere of salvation and eternal life; on the side of philosophy when it claims a knowledge higher than the naive knowledge incorporated in religion. Among the possibilities in two types of the dualism of philosophy, Berdyaev chooses that which maintains "the primacy of freedom over Being." "Tragedy springs from the impossibility of attaining Being in an objective way, or of realizing communion" in humanity, because of the conflict between the Ego and the object, and that is the problem with which this volume is concerned. The Ego is the foundation of all philosophy, and a Personalist philosophy helps "overcome isolation by means of

knowledge" and will thus "transcend the immediate frontiers" of individuality.

Following a lucid discussion of the theses of various philosophers on "the knowing subject and man," we are led to the religious sources of philosophical theory. For Berdyaev "objectification can never be identical with manifestation, revelation or incarnation." Our enigma cannot be solved "as long as knowledge is regarded as a mere subjective reflection of the object, and Being as an objective state from which the subject has been eliminated." And by opposing subject and object, philosophical theory comes to an impasse in eliminating the subject from Being and making Being objective. The subject becomes non-existential, while the objective world becomes "one of phenomena rather than one of existences."

Philosophical naturalism is on the decline "because it fails to attribute any significance to human existence in the natural and objective worlds." This brings us to Berdyaev's thesis: "Objective knowledge is invariably social." But is knowledge a creative act of personality and does it imply freedom? This study is mainly "to establish the relationship between knowledge as an instrument of objectified society and knowledge as a means of achieving existential communion."

Passing over much of the author's elaboration of these basic ideas, we come to his conclusions, which may be summed up as follows. The Ego is synonymous with freedom, is the source of philosophy, is "compounded of both body and soul." The Ego must never be a social instrument and must ever seek to transcend itself. Man in solitude is in a prison and his longing for knowledge is his endeavour to overcome solitude, for "ultimately the problem of solitude involves the

problem of death"; it is still problematical whether that solitude is everlasting.

We come now to the problem of the Ego's relation to the object on one hand and to the Thou on the other: that of communication between consciousnesses. Philosophy has been so concerned with the Ego and the Other-Ego that it has overlooked the relationship between the Ego, the Thou and the We. The communion which the Ego seeks must be one which implies reciprocity. To triumph over solitude is to transcend the Ego by entering into communion with the Thou. The mystery of Christianity is in the Ego's transcendence in Christ.

The problem of time is considered by Berdyaev to be the fundamental one of human existence. Time is "an evil, a mortal disease." Death is only the result of life's materialization. But knowledge and time are intimately related, for "as life becomes more technical and mechanical, so the evil of time becomes increasingly virulent," as an Existential philosophy makes clear. It is as time that we experience our destiny. Christian eschatology throws no light on destiny, from death to the end of the world. Every man lives his inner Apocalypse and this is where he is confronted with the ultimate problem of the personality, which is the fundamental one of Existential philosophy. An Ego is not a personality, nor is an individual. Personality is not substantial, but it integrates spirit, soul and body, and is the symbol of values. By it man acts on the world, and it also symbolizes the Ego's identification with another Ego, "its reincarnation."

Our effort to overcome solitude can be successful only if we come into communion, in the knowledge of the spiritual world; "not in the world of social frequentation." The Ego becomes a personality by "a free

subordination of self to the supra-personal"; the sole claim of personality to existence is that it is the image and likeness of God. Personality raises the problem of Realist and Nominalist philosophies. Augustine deformed Christianity by conceiving the personality as a means of achieving order and harmony. Communist, Fascist and Nationalist philosophies follow Augustine.

This problem of personality is not one of sociology but of metaphysics and the Existential philosophy. Personality is not a cell in an organized society. Its development "implies sacrifice and renunciation," triumph over ego-centrism, but never self-hate. Man has been successively slave of nature, the State, the nation, a class and "finally of technology and organized society." Man escapes his solitude by the victory of the spiritual and personal over the generic. There can be no union of personalities in a "social collective."

The two rival theories of existence are the seeking of a negative salvation with freedom from suffering, and the effort for self-realization in a creative life. We face the issue—there is no alternative but "to shoulder . . . the burden of the terrifying, distressing and degraded world," but conscious that we participate in the extra-natural sphere of Being where lies the ultimate solution. "The rediscovery of man will also be the rediscovery of God," and the apprehension of truth "depends on the degree of community between men and their communion in the spirit."

Besides his development of his Existential philosophy—and largely because it is existential—Berdyaev presents some very practical analogies in his application of his principles to the anti-personalist philosophies of the Communist, Fascist and National-Socialist systems of education. Thus this volume may, at least in its

conclusions, be relieved of its seeming over-speculative character.

With the author, man's spiritual "Solitude"—in the very midst of the social order—is his tragic burden of history. His "Society" is in a transcendent sphere and is existential only there. Berdyaev's Existential philosophy is a mode of non-objective intellection, is on the extra-natural plane and the philosopher is in the depth of Being, "for the subject is himself a part of Being" and "communes with its mystery." Thus, Berdyaev would probably say to Barth, "theology has here ground for its 'yea, yea' and 'nay, nay,' which is of the nature of revelation."

2. MAN AND HIS DESTINY

Berdyaev, in an earlier volume, *The Meaning of History*, searches back to the causes of what he apparently believes to be the end of one of the life-cycles of civilization. His dialectic of history is on the divine, eternal plane; Christ and His struggle are ever going on in eternity and the problems of Christianity can be met only on a transcendental height, as he affirms in the previous volume reviewed. When there is catastrophe our common historical criticism fails. History is consummated in Christ, whose earthly appearance—in time—is but the manifestation of the struggle going on in eternity. History must be interpreted as in eternity, not as in time.

It is also of interest that a volume on ethics, perhaps the most profound study of our immediate day, which declares that "Christianity alone teaches us how to be completely free from the external world which thwarts and injures us," should be "translated from the Russian." Such is Berdyaev's, *THE DESTINY OF MAN*.

The author begins with an accusation against the

epistemology which would challenge the validity of philosophical knowledge—itself a philosophy which is self-destructive. Philosophy, he says, "forever menaced with being enslaved by religion or by science," has unhappily freed itself from religion and revelation and fallen into a worse dependence on "the lower realm of positive science." Philosophy sees the world from the point of view of man, while science sees it apart from man. Berdyaev finds no consolation in knowing of a Universal Reason, unless he sees its connection with human reason. "There must be an inner kinship between the knower and the known."

The basis of ethics—moral experience—is the basis of philosophy. The fundamental problem of ethics is the criterion of good and evil. Ethics is a philosophy of the freedom presupposed by the very existence of moral life. Our modern systems which make society the source and end of moral values are involved in a vicious circle. Man is a spiritual being. Ethics cannot be grounded in either sociology or biology.

Berdyaev proceeds to a discussion of the origin of good and evil. He finds it strange that "theological thought has never concerned itself with God's inner life." Plunging deeply into the age-long problem, the author finds three active principles in the world: the super-cosmic God, the free human spirit, and fate, or destiny. "The new ethics must be knowledge, not only of good and evil, but also of the tragic" in moral experience.

Sweeping broadly, "the origin of the world and of man becomes intelligible . . . only in the light of Christ." That is his thesis throughout all the mazes of this study. "There are three stages in the development of the spirit; the original paradisiacal wholeness, pre-conscious wholeness which has not had the experi-

ence of thought and freedom; division, reflection, valuation, freedom of choice, and, finally, superconscious wholeness and completeness that come after freedom, reflection and valuation." Our moral paradoxes are due to living in a "fallen world." "We become slaves, now of evil and now of good." God is "beyond" good and evil. A system of ethics is needed "which interprets moral life as a creative activity." Ethics presents two conceptions of life. One is duration in time, "'bad infinity.'" The other is eternity, "'divine infinity,'" victory over time.

Man can be interpreted only through his relation to the higher—to God. Berdyaev regards the naturalistic view as "the feeblest of all anthropological theories." "The only theory that is eternal and unsurpassed is the Jewish-Christian view," although even that does not show "all the consequences of the Christological doctrine." The Christian conception rests on two ideas: "Man is the image and likeness of God" and "God became man" in Jesus Christ, to manifest Himself as the "God-Man."

Our conception of man rests on that of personality, whose value is based on the spiritual principles, and on this view "one must recognize the pre-existence of the soul." Sex "may become creative and be a spiritual power," so great are man's spiritual possibilities.

Scientific psychology can do no more to discover the image of God in man than can sociology. "The optimistic and intellectualistic psychology of Thomism" is "erroneous." It minimizes the effects of original sin.

There are three types of ethics—of law, of redemption and of creativeness. The doctrines of free will and teleology belong to the ethics of law. Only in Christianity has man "found himself, reached spiritual maturity" and become free from his lower natural elements.

Law is pre-Christian morality. It is often "inhuman and pitiless towards the human personality." It is an expression of "herd morality." "The terrible thing about moralism is that it strives to make man into an automaton of virtue." Only the ethics of "grace" "rises above the opposition between the 'aristocratic' freedom and the 'democratic' law."

This conflict between law and grace appears in every concrete moral problem. The Thomists are wrong in their contention that "man always strives for bliss and happiness." He "prefers the free creation of spiritual values," although at the same time "a sick being."

Man has always longed for an ethics of "redemption." The Gospel is one of life, not law. It is the ethics of love, concrete and personal, not just humanistic. Its morality is not that of Scribe and Pharisee. "Christianity discovers the image of God," "even in the wicked." It is a morality of strength. Even suffering is redemptive—when of the right kind. But this Gospel and its kingdom are "not of this world."

Finally, we have "the ethics of creativeness"—the "way of realizing the fullness of life." "It is concerned with values and not with salvation." It springs from an acquired freedom. In his spiritual development, man comes to love freedom, has become compassionate and is more than ever before eager to create.

Space forbids describing the author's application of principles to the concrete problems of ethics—truth and falsehood; conscience, whose very existence proves that it is free; fear; the commonplace; love and compassion; the state revolution and war. "There can be no ideal form of state." "The democratic state is just as much a kingdom of the Cæsar as a monarchy is." The state is "devoid of grace and holiness." The last war was "the end of a whole historical epoch" and begins a new

one. "War has a fatal dialectic of its own which will bring it to an end." "Revolutions are sent by Providence" and are not induced by political causes. But they, too, are "devoid of grace" and are symptoms "of man being forsaken by God."

Berdyaeve's whole discussion of social science is penetrating and reveals many paradoxes. "From the Christian point of view . . . unlimited ownership" of material possessions is "altogether wrong." God is the only rightful owner. The conservative Christianity which claims that social justice is unattainable because man is sinful, is "both hypocritical and sociologically false."

Technical achievements in scientific progress reach a point where they may "turn into black magic," if we do not subordinate them to high moral purpose. But "the Gospel theories of wealth and poverty cannot be translated into social categories."

The closing chapter of this searching book is on "eschatological ethics." At its highest, ethics is concerned with death rather than life. "*The meaning of death is that there can be no eternity in time and that an endless temporal series would be meaningless.*" Death is not the last word. The author does not accept the philosophy of a natural immortality of the soul. They are shallow who try to forget death. Christianity alone faces death as conqueror, because Christ rose and "conquered the deadly powers of the world." The free and enlightened acceptance of death "is a creative activity of the spirit."

Hell has a place only in religious ethics. The motive of fear in religion has no real religious significance. The justification of hell on grounds of justice, as by Dante and Thomas Aquinas, is "revolting and lacking in spiritual depth." Hell is in human experience "a

symbol of man's spiritual life." It is not eternity but "endless duration in time." Struggle against hell consists in awakening spiritual life. The idea of separation between the " 'good'" and the " 'wicked'" is just an invention by those who "consider themselves 'good.'" Hell is just "final inability to love." "The most pitiless tribunal is that of one's own conscience." Berdyaev's characterization of the idea of "eternal torments as the triumph of divine justice" is a magnificent piece of invective.

Mortals have to think of paradise in negative terms. The Kingdom of God cannot exist in time. It is its end. Paradise is not good and goodness in our sense. The Kingdom of Heaven "lies beyond good and evil and is free from our good and from our evil." It is transcendent good.

The last eschatological problem of ethics is the meaning of evil. The dualistic and monistic philosophies "are equally invalid" and reveal the paradox that evil is meaningless and yet must have meaning. "God is to have the last word." The best formulation of an ethics which recognizes the paradox is: "Act as though you could hear the Divine call to participate through free and creative activity in the Divine work; cultivate in yourself a pure and original conscience, discipline your personality, struggle with evil in yourself and around you—not in order to relegate the wicked to hell and create a kingdom of evil, but to conquer evil and to further a creative regeneration of the wicked."

And thus a great philosopher closes four hundred pages of abstract reasoning, replete with erudition, often shining in resplendent sentences, or penetrated by flashes of spiritual insight, containing the positive values of both a Barth and a Schleiermacher or Ritschl.

And what is this conclusion but just about what most

of us were taught by our simple mothers who would not have comprehended a page of this book. I commend this volume, first as a challenge to intellectual apathy or laziness (anyone who undertakes to read the book will need all his mental acumen) ; secondly, as an exposition of ethics which will provide pretty nearly a year's sermons.

IV

THEOLOGIES OF "CRISIS"

Sören Kierkegaard, the originator of what has come to be called the "Existential" theology, followed by the Barthians and one-time or near Barthians, has given rise to what has come to be termed the "theology of crisis." While most of the studies in this volume are directed towards the catastrophic nature of contemporary life, we may consider this chapter as portraying the more recent expositions of the more distinctive "crisis" theology.¹

I. MAN AND THE TRANSCENDENT GOD

Professor Emil Brunner of Zurich, once follower or intimate associate of Barth, should be read by all thinking ministers and teachers because he is influencing so many students, both in Continental Europe and England.² His volume *GOD AND MAN: THE NATURE OF PERSONAL BEING* is thus of especial significance because it bears the imprint of the Student Christian Movement, and is as near a simple message as Brunner could ever deliver, and also indicates some of the divergencies among proponents of the "crisis" theology.

Professor Brunner first draws the distinction between faith and philosophy, between "the philosophers' idea of God and the Creator God of faith." There can be no synthesis of the truth revealed to faith and the findings

¹ Previous similar studies are treated in *Trends of Christian Thinking* and to a lesser degree in *Contemporary Christian Thought*.

² And now evidently at Princeton Theological Seminary.

of philosophy, whether the latter be idealism, realism or the system of identity; each system contradicts the others. Only in the Christian faith do we find the God who is grace, divine personality, divine initiative.

Turning from philosophy to ethics, Professor Brunner recognizes only two real species: idealistic legalism and realist eudæmonism. Each of these is opposed to the other. They agree at but one point; from the Christian viewpoint their common error is that man himself may achieve the good, and they are both self-centred.

Passing on to psychology, we have the naturalistic positivist, the idealist and the romantic. These spring from the three types of philosophy which Brunner repudiates. They treat man as a unity; but he is dual, because of his sin. Professor Brunner develops what he calls "Biblical psychology." Man is a fallen sinner, he is not autonomous but theonomous. He has only one way of escape. It is by a special revelation of God. On that alone Christian faith rests. The presuppositions of this faith cannot be proved, nor have they anything in common with science and philosophy. The Christian revelation has nothing in common with anything.

The author does not, however, deny a general revelation beyond that in the Bible, but our knowledge of it is mingled with error. There is a clear cut distinction between general and special revelation.

Discussing the nature of the Church, we are told that this "Word of God," which is the ground of personality, is also the ground of the Church.

In his introductory analysis of Brunner, which I have been following, Professor David Cairns concludes with this obvious judgment: "It is clear that there is much that remains to be done before this great subject of the nature of general and special revelation is adequately understood."

Karl Barth and Emil Brunner started out together, but their recent discussions reveal them, in several vital issues, as far apart, and I will continue by following Professor Cairns' summary of their dispute. Barth characterizes their divergences by affirming that Brunner has (quoting Cairns) "refused to grow into a full-fledged dialectical bird." On the other hand, Brunner, as we have seen above, repudiates Barth's denial of any validity in general revelation. They now often draw quite opposite conclusions on certain articles of belief. For example, to Brunner the theory of the Virgin Birth invalidates just what Barth thinks it proves.

Dr. Cairns tells us that we can no longer think of Barth and Brunner as in the same class. Just as they cut themselves off from all the thinkers before them, so now each cuts himself off from the other. They began by a mutual series of antitheses to what they called liberalism or modernism. Now Brunner has prepared a series of antitheses to what he alleges are Barth's theses.

Barth declares, says Brunner, that sin has absolutely effaced the divine image in man. Brunner's antithesis is that while man has lost the righteousness he had before the Fall, nevertheless he is still left with capacity for receiving "the Word."

Barth denies any general revelation in history, nature or conscience. Brunner's antithesis is that the Bible recognizes such a revelation, although not adequate to salvation.

Barth finds no point of contact in man's fallen nature, to which the Word can appeal. Brunner declares that this makes man no more than stock or stone, who could not be saved at all.

Barth declares that the new creation is not the perfection of, but only the annihilation of, the old fallen

nature. Brunner believes the new life to be something more than an annihilation of something.

But Barth does not accept Brunner's characterization of his theology. He says that he is simply indifferent to natural theology, but in another place seems to contradict this and justify Brunner when he says: "I reject with horror and passion every natural theology."

If the reader wants to follow this debate, he can do no better than to read Dr. Cairns' analysis of it in his introduction to Brunner's volume. It is interesting, even though not all profitable.

Professor Cairns, while admitting that the two great theologians have parted with finality, nevertheless believes that, in general, the theology they, with others, represent, "is still easily the most noteworthy influence in the theological world to-day." (An overstatement, I think.) Professor Cairns believes it is a saviour from both modernism and fundamentalism. And I heartily agree with his estimate of Barth's values in the German Church and State conflict.

Coming back to Brunner and his book, Dr. Cairns finds him clearer than Barth, but feels that "his theology is too complete for a man of his age."

If I may venture to add a word, I feel that both Barth and Brunner have made great contributions in their positive affirmations, which they obscure by their dialectics. They often rationalize while condemning rationalism. They philosophize just when they are repudiating philosophy. They suffer by their intolerance and by using the language of contempt in dealing with their adversaries.

Acquaint oneself with them? Yes. Recommend them as guides for young pastors and thinkers? No. Extricate from their own often confused thinking the great affirmations which they have emphasized: God,

Sin, Judgment, Redemption, the Church? Yes. As I have both read them and conversed with them, their chief limitation has seemed to be the lack of intellectual modesty when they are most roundly condemning the very intellectualism which characterizes themselves.

2. WHAT IS THE FAITH: AN ANSWER

Recalling A. M. Fairbairn as one of my teachers of nearly half a century ago, I was especially interested in the answer of his present successor Nathaniel Micklem, as Principal of Mansfield College, Oxford, to the question, "WHAT IS THE FAITH?" Dr. Micklem does not propose to state his own beliefs, "but what the Church believes." While he could not write to-day as he did even five years ago, he does not wish to repudiate what he then wrote. He simply wrote then in "ignorance."

Principal Micklem now finds that Protestantism has failed "to maintain communications with its base" in its effort "to accommodate the Christian Faith to the modern mind," especially to "men of modern science." At the same time, however, the last generation did achieve for us "our intellectual liberty." He desires to help bridge the division "between those who use and treasure the old formulæ of the Faith and those who, through intellectual honesty, cannot employ the old language and repudiate many of the old ideas, yet desire with all their hearts to restate the eternal Gospel in the language of the day."

We cannot define the Christian Faith by seeking "the lowest common factor" shared by all, nor do the creeds do more than bear witness to and safeguard the Faith. We need to distinguish between their form and content. We cannot determine the Faith by what outstanding Christians may believe. Our definition is not to be determined by reason, although it must be reasonable.

Religious experience may test, but does not give us our answer. The Fundamentalists determine their doctrine and then use the Scriptures to support it. The rigid authoritarianism of the Roman Church is not acceptable. This Faith, while on the one hand definite, is not fully definable. There is a substance of faith, moreover, which "corresponds with the Christian revelation."

God reveals Himself in Jesus Christ, and doctrine is the intellectual expression of this revelation. God "*spoke*" to the prophets, but in His Son He "*came*." Jesus did not just reflect God in abstract terms of His character; He revealed God "*in action*," "*of eternal, world-altering significance*," so that we become aware of God through Him. This faith is "*inseparable from miracle*." (Which means little, as the author declines or neglects to define the term.) The Incarnation "*implies an act of God different in kind* (italics mine) from the normal operations of His Providence."

There cannot be any such thing as undogmatic Christianity. Our problem is to discover which is permanent in Dogma or Creeds. If we can "define the Gospel, we have found the substance in distinction from the form, the permanent in distinction from the changing." Revelation is simple, it is that God revealed "His very self" in Christ. While theology in the New Testament varies, the writers shared a common vision expressed in the words, "Word" or "Messiah."

The Creeds are amenable to criticism. They are complex. But "the Gospel" is simple—God in Christ. That is Dogma, which is permanent, as distinguished from Theology, which is transient. The central and pivotal dogma of the Faith is the Incarnation as "an inconceivable (one can hardly see why inconceivable) act of mercy on the part of Almighty God in human history."

After relieving our minds by telling us that this may be apprehended by faith as "an intuition, not as the conclusion of a train of argument," Dr. Micklem takes us into that train. At times, I see where I am going with him; at other times I do not. A passenger on the train expresses the judgment that the heart and substance of the Christian faith is that Jesus, the supreme Teacher, leads us to happiness and victory by the acceptance of His teaching. Dr. Micklem admits that in his "moments of doubt" he reverts to this. He even says that "this may prove in the end to be the ultimate truth and substance of Christianity." Nevertheless, "essentially it is not the Christian Faith and is scarcely a pale reflection of it." This "modern parody" is, however, "but the common sense of all religious men." Faith in God's fatherhood and in the brotherhood of man is "a beautiful religious faith," but it does not answer our question, "What is Faith?" For our answer we go first to the Bible, for the Word of God, the revelation, the Gospel are "recorded once for all in Holy Scripture."

"The divine revelation," however, "is prior both to Church and Scripture." "Faith" may be used in two senses; "consent of the mind whereby we believe," or "the contents of the mind when we believe." The authoritarian and the individualist view are not contradictory, but either may lead us astray. What then, is the relation between dogma and personal experience? The Church explains it. The Church tells us what has been "traversed again and again by the pious and learned"; if you had time to study the doctrine, "you would certainly find that your faith involves it." "Therein is seen the true and proper authority of the Church." (I suppose the ordinary Christian might say, "What Church?")

The Incarnation is the distinctive element in Christianity. It is "a religious experience" and, "therefore, all theology rests upon the religious experience of believers," or rather on "that revelation which awakens our adoring love."

But the Church's authority may be questioned. Well, if the Modernist thinks he knows better than Paul, John, Augustine, Calvin, Luther, Wesley and Spurgeon; "if we claim that the Christian faith is really something quite other than they supposed, it would be well for us to cultivate a sense of humour." "The authority of the Church is clear." "The Word cannot be other than the Church declares it to be." "But (italics mine) the Church's definitions and expositions of the Word may be tested by the Word itself declared in Scripture." Part I of the volume thus leaves us—where? At this point Principal Micklem's conclusion reminds me, by way of contrast, of Professor Edward C. Moore's "evidences" and especially his definition, or rather his way of expressing, when he speaks of "faith."⁸

Dr. Micklem finds what he terms "Faith" subject to restatement, but he seeks to discover, beyond varying forms, "an enduring dogmatic element, constituting the substance of the Gospel." Part II is entitled "The Content of Dogma." The Trinity—"the Deity is three Persons in One God—is a dogma of faith." Revelation is the vision of God in Christ. "Dogma corresponds to the affirmations which we are bound to make when we attempt to express the logical and spiritual implications of revelation." "Theology is the systematic attempt to relate dogma to the whole of knowl-

⁸ See *Trends of Christian Thinking*, by the author. Professor Moore once came near being Principal Fairbairn's successor at Mansfield College.

edge." We need to distinguish between "the doctrine of the Trinity as theology and the doctrine as dogma."

Dr. Micklem first admits that the doctrine "constitutes a statement, not an explanation, of unfathomable mystery." Nevertheless, he believes "it is possible to make the doctrine intelligible to the educated reader." In a side note he says that "humble believers may skip" the five succeeding pages. Not feeling as humble as I ought, I read them. As an intellectual exercise they were worth while, but I agreed most with the author's interpolation that we were "seeking to express that which is *utterly* (italics mine) beyond our comprehension." For the most part, Principal Micklem's exposition of the Trinity is not different from that of former evangelical theologians, excluding the Modalists.

Once more, however, in the explanation of the Incarnation, "humble believers may again skip" several pages. While more humble now, I nevertheless read them, but confess to little or no strengthening of "faith" in the alleged proof that God "exists in three *hypostaseis*." And by following Moore's more intuitive processes of thought, I reach conclusions which are substantially identical with those of Micklem, but for which Dr. Micklem's rationalization adds very little.

Dr. Micklem goes on to answer the question: "Is it necessary, is it possible, is it reasonable for us to-day to believe in 'the Virgin Birth'?" "Is it implied in the Christian revelation" and thus a dogma? (On this, as we have noted, Barth and Brunner have given completely opposite answers.) Our author concludes that the Virgin Birth "is by no means the only possible formulation of the Christian dogma, but it is at least one of the ways in which the mystery of the Incarnation may not unfittingly be set forth." (I suppose he means as imagery.)

Following an abstract discussion of the human nature of Jesus, Principal Micklem, accepting the theory of the "Fall" of man and "original sin" as dogma, concludes that "the Word assumed human nature, but not fallen human nature; He became man, but not a man; He took on flesh, but not a human personality." Dr. Micklem would "rejoice" if he could find some way of expressing the Incarnation other than that of the "Two Natures doctrine," but he sees no alternative.

On the Resurrection he asks: "Are the empty tomb and the 'physical' Resurrection" integral in our faith? He thinks that "the story can be told without this element." As with the Virgin Birth, it is not a dogma. But "the Resurrection . . . in the sense of victory . . . is dogma in the strictest sense." Likewise the "descent into hell," although the "story" may be told without reference to it. It is idle to speculate on the historicity of the Ascension, but nevertheless it is a dogma.

As he goes on, the author thus, in defining "the content of dogma," appears to become less and less dogmatic: "We may reject all the theologies of the Atonement . . . but the mystery itself is at the heart of the Christian faith." (A conclusion which I think is, in some way, applicable to all the "dogmas.") "Sacraments are not dogmas," and yet "they are part of the Gospel."

The entire study may now be said to lead us up to "The Church Catholic and Apostolic." The significance of Easter and Pentecost, and the distinction between the Church visible and invisible, are considered, with full admission that "the Church visible on earth is a company of weak and sinful and ignorant men and women, divided amongst themselves, showing many evidences of the spirit of the world." The Church in-

visible "is that same company of people, viewed as those who belong to the covenant of grace, have received the Holy Spirit and are members of that Body whose Head is Christ." "The catholicity of the Church, the unity of the Church, and the holiness of the Church are indissolubly connected with the Word of God which is the Christian 'story.'" "The Church is perfect Spirit and very imperfect men."

The principle of the hierarchy is not derived from Scripture. Any claim that any particular church is *the* Church is "bare assertion." "Our protest is not against that which episcopacy represents, but only against that view which would make Word and Sacrament contingent upon the office, not the office on the Word." The alternative to hierarchy is the Word. "The Holy Catholic Church is defined by the Gospel which it proclaims." "Any community which professes its faith in the Word of God declared in Scripture and defined in the creeds and confessions of the Church must be deemed a part of the Church Catholic, unless its profession be manifestly insincere or its life manifestly deny its faith."

But "we are confronted by a staggering paradox—that the Church is the mighty work of God . . . and at the same time . . . is divided, worldly, stupid, corrupt, apathetic, stuffy, and at the same time it is the Bride of Christ." It is "an all too human institution which hides a divine and supernatural life against which the gates of hell shall not prevail."

The volume closes with a summary of itself which is so simple that the "humble" reader will conclude that he might just as well have accepted an invitation to "skip" its often labored rationalization and speculation, much of which is irrelevant to what Jesus called "faith." Indeed, in one of the author's closing sentences, he tells us that "in essence the Christian faith is not a theory or

philosophy." (Or, if I may quote Edward C. Moore again, "religion" "is feeling for higher things. It is belief in that which is ever beyond us. It is experience that that which is beyond us, if we give ourselves to it, gives itself, in a measure, at least, to us.") In fact, I suppose I should have little fault to find with Principal Micklem's speculative effort, had he not affirmed that he was describing "*Christian faith*," for I do not think that that is what he was doing, except in part. At times, both premises and conclusions are obscured by the author's dialectic.

I think Dr. Micklem is most persuasive when he is mystical. He is at his greatest when speaking in large terms, which are sometimes lost in detail, as though he were deviating from his course to explore a by-path. Indeed, at times he appears to stop short as he feels the *beyondness* of what he is trying to express. At others we have great gleams of insight.

Principal Micklem makes a distinction between dogma and theology. I wonder if, instead of sometimes seeming to identify dogma and the Faith, he does not need to distinguish still more between these, especially in their processes.⁴

3. THE CHRISTIAN MESSAGE TO A NON-CHRISTIAN WORLD

The International Missionary Council which has just met in Madras faced the same problem that was considered last year at Oxford and Edinburgh. In preparation for this meeting a volume was prepared analyzing the world situation as it affects the Church: **THE**

⁴ In a subsequent letter, this gracious and charming teacher says: "My book asks the question, What is *the* faith? not What is faith?" As an example of the changes taking place in Christian thought, one might compare, or contrast, Dr. Micklem's views with those of his predecessor, W. B. Selbie, as well as with Moore.

CHRISTIAN MESSAGE IN A NON-CHRISTIAN WORLD,
by Hendrik Kraemer of the University of Leiden.

This book is of especial value to American readers, not only on general grounds, but because its thought is that of a Continental near- or part-Barthian, and is quite different from the American approach in *Rethinking Missions*. Moreover, it is not confined to the Foreign Mission problem. It presents the Christian Church, in the West as well as the East, as it stands "in a pagan non-Christian world," and is fundamentally a modern theological study of the basis and nature of the Christian faith, presenting its gospel, not as a perfected state of religious development, but as one in a "quite new world of divine acts," and a new revelation.

The author tells us that his main concern is Evangelism, (which, however, he interprets broadly). All mission work must be by an evangelistic approach, no matter how expressed.

In a world in transition, the Church is forced back to the religious radicalism of the Bible, to discover or re-discover its essential nature and its obligation, in the midst of a world of "discordant unity." The former dream of a "grand cultural synthesis" is dispelled. All absolutes have disappeared and "the spirit and attitude of relativism" is victorious. Few modern men, however, yet realize that "the place to which they are destined to look is heaven, and that heaven is not closed." Modern secularism and relativism are the result of a "gospel of the autonomy of the human spirit and of its intellectual and moral judgment," with ideals which to some extent are "distorted and derived elements of Christianity." The relativism and secularism which were apprehended as a liberation have proved, not a triumphal march, but a "death dance." "Religion has become irrelevant in modern life because God has

become irrelevant," and in its place we have "cataclysmic and social revolutions" under three names, with "all the paraphernalia of a full-fledged religion," with their gods, which claim dominion over all life.

The Foreign Mission field in parts of the East "endured the Western civilization rather than digested it"; the people were largely victims, but have now become actors. "It would be nothing to marvel at if, in many parts of the East, a desperate surrender to false absolutes should ensue." To overcome this calls for "more than the traditional attitude of aristocratic relativism of the East." The crisis of the world's life is the crisis of the Church. The Church needs to realize that, "according to its essential nature," it is not one of many religious and moral institutions, but a "divine-human" society. It must recognize two facts: First, that the whole cultural, political and social development of the world has led to the steadily increasing secularization of life; second, that its urgent need is "a fundamental re-orientation" of its relation to all spheres of life. And this applies to the Church in the West and the East alike.

Whither, then, Missions? The missionary awakening since the eighteenth century "is one of the most amazing movements in the history of the world," and its call to-day is more urgent than ever. Indeed, it is just at the beginning. The development of the independence and autonomy of the daughter-Churches makes it, not less, but all the more urgent, now that we have a world-wide Christian community.

After a discussion of method and technique, Professor Kraemer concludes that mission work "by purely religious and moral persuasion" is a self-evident maxim. "Recommending Christianity as the bringer of enlightenment and freedom, as a capital national and so-

cial tonic to make powerful nations, as the infallible guide to progress, has come to naught" (one of the occasional exaggerations of the author). It is a danger because it "necessarily entails disillusionment." The real starting point is "the divine commission to proclaim the Lordship of Christ over all life."

What is first needed is, therefore, a clear consciousness of what the faith of the Church is, and a translation of it in relation to the state of the world and men. First of all, God. The realism of the Bible and the Christian faith "leaves every metaphysical problem aside" (and yet later on the author becomes a bit metaphysical at times). "It simply takes seriously the fact that God is God, and that if He is God, His will is the Ground of all that is." Theology should be what its name implies, "a tale about God."

The heart of the Christian message is the Incarnation. The Christian faith may be expressed in many ways, but "Jesus represents His own person and work as central in His whole message." He is more than prophet, teacher and preacher. We may describe the Christian faith as a new way and quality of life. But "the dominant point in the Christian ethic is the same as the Christian faith"; it is "radically religious and theocentric" and is "entirely incommensurable with all other ethics in the world." This is found in the apostolic writings as clearly as in the Gospels.

What then is the Christian *social* ethic? The author first answers negatively. "In the first place, from this radically religious ethic," "no ready-made political and social or international programme can be derived. Social and political programmes and life-systems belong to the relative sphere of historic human life." "There is no definite guidance in regard to the political, social, cultural, and economic spheres of life." (Here again,

Dr. Kraemer is at least likely to be misleading. The term "guidance" calls for definition.) "In the seeming weakness of the Christian ethic, its so-called 'other-worldliness,' lies its strength."

Dr. Kraemer endeavours to avoid the possibility of misunderstanding of his negations: "Quietist sanctioning of the *status quo* in the political and social order . . . is a radical misconception" of the Christian ethic. That ethic "produces a great soberness of judgment and attitude and keeps Christians in constant conflict and tension." "We never ought to forget that the natural drag of mankind, and also of the Christian and the Christian Church, is towards resignation to or conformity with things as they are." The Christian ethic is prophetic "and calls for strenuous and inspired action."

We reach the heart of the author's discussion in "The Attitude Towards the Non-Christian Religions." The religion of the revelation in Christ, with all that it involves as to faith and ethics, revolves around two poles. "The first pole is knowledge of God of a very special kind that upsets all other conceptions of God or of the Divine." (The reviewer asks, why the term "upsets"?) "The second pole is a knowledge of man, also of a very special kind, in comparison with any other conception of man." Christianity witnesses to "a divine, transcendental order of life that transcends and judges by virtue of its inherent authority the whole range of historical human life in every period," and its attitude must be positive. Here Dr. Kraemer falls into the Barthian dialectic: "Christianity, if true to its mission, ought to stand to the world—the combination of a fierce 'yes' and at the same time a fierce 'no' to the world: the *human* and *broken* reflection of the divine 'no' and 'yes' of the holy God of reconciliation, who

held the world under His absolute judgment and at the same time claimed it for His love."

The attitude towards the non-Christian religions is that of affirming our conception of man and "to pass judgment on our fellow man and his aspirations, attainments and aberrations." The standard is Jesus Christ. But we need to recognize our common humanity and avoid spiritual arrogance. We must, however, face the question: "Does God—and, if so, how and where does God—reveal Himself in the religious life as present in the non-Christian religions?"

Professor Kraemer's ensuing discussion of "natural religion" is rather mediating, on the whole. "As scientific research and critical thinking both teach, there is no 'natural' religion; there is only a universal religious consciousness in man, which produces many similarities." This consciousness nowhere speaks the clear language of Christian revelation, "because it is confused and blinded by its inherent disharmony." Christianity gives "the divine answer" to a "demonic and guilty disharmony of man and the world." Barth's great service is in reminding us of "the real meaning of revelation" as "an act of God" which "remains hidden except to the eye of *faith*, and even then remains an incomprehensible miracle."

If the reviewer understands Barth, however, or unless Barth has changed his oft-changing view recently, Professor Kraemer does not share the Barthian view of natural theology, although just how much he means is not clear when he says: "Even in this fallen world God shines through in a broken, troubled way: in reason, in nature and in history." He finds "the urge for truth, beauty, goodness and holiness stirring in science, philosophy, art and religion." But we cannot call "sublime religious and moral achievements the pure and

unmistakable evidence of divine revelation of the same sort and quality as the revelation in Jesus Christ." (The reviewer will leave the reader to raise the question as to the dualism involved.) On the other hand, "no man, and certainly no Christian, can claim the power or the right to limit God's revelatory working." Nevertheless, again (and here the author gets on safer ground), "the God of the philosophers and the scholars, however lofty their conception may be, is *not* the God and Father of Jesus Christ."

Having thus discussed the relation between kind and degree in revelation, Professor Kraemer is clearer and perhaps surer that "the glimpses of revelation and the religious intuitions of mankind" are not "a preceding and preparatory stage for the full revelation in Christ." (Here again, a seemingly inescapable dualism.) We cannot use the term, fulfilment, in characterizing the Christian revelation in relation to the non-Christian religions. Again the author falls into the dialectical reasoning: "God works in man and shines through nature." "The religious and moral life of man is man's achievement, but also God's wrestling with him; it manifests a receptivity to God, but at the same time an inexcusable (the reviewer asks if this applies to man who has never heard of the Christian revelation) disobedience and blindness to God." We are restored to a balance when Dr. Kraemer tells us that "the attitude towards the non-Christian religions is a remarkable combination of downright intrepidity and of radical humility." The approach must be with prophetic truth and priestly love.

Professor Kraemer next proceeds to practice. The missionary feels that he must earnestly seek "points of contact." But Barth says "there is no point of contact." Kraemer seems to conclude that the "one point is the

disposition and the attitude of the missionary." "The problem of the concrete points of contact is thus" "a problem of missionary ethics." Like his discussion of natural revelation, Dr. Kraemer's conclusion seems vague.

The section of the volume analyzing and interpreting "the non-Christian systems of life and thought" is perhaps the best part of it. It leaves little or no place for the seeming approaches to syncretism in *Rethinking Missions*.

Special note should be made of the author's view of Judaism. He believes that "the obligation of the Christian Church to carry out its apostolic privilege and duty towards Judaism is as stringent as it is toward the rest of the non-Christian world"; "even more stringent." All will agree, each in his own way, that "the empirical Christian Church owes to the Jews, especially in the present time, a clear demonstration of what Christianity really means."

Another best section is the description of the present religious situation in Foreign Mission lands. In some parts the primitive religions are destined to perish and disappear as institutional and organized religious bodies. Programmes in India are "full of dynamite," and there is little hope in the "rising orgy of religious nationalism"; China spells "restless chaos." The New Life Movement is clear indication of a search for stability, but may be ephemeral. Japan, in a different way, is equally in unrest and instability, seeking both national cohesion and religious liberty. Whether Shinto is a religion or not is a mooted question. The Buddhist revival is richer in aspiration than in activity. Islam is the sole non-Christian religion witnessing extension, even without missionary effort. Political changes have put Islam as a religion on a new basis.

The missionary approach has changed. The impression that these religions were adequately approached by taking them as a vast, degrading and decaying section of the spiritual life of mankind, "steeped in darkness and error, has turned out to be utterly erroneous." On the other hand, we have found that we cannot identify a so-called "Christian" civilization with Christianity. "The significant difference between historical Christianity and the other religions lies in another direction than that of grade or richness of experience." We need to understand these religions as complex civilizations and social structures. We must not expect that the permeation of the East with ideas and ideals that are derived from Christianity means that this permeative reality is an embryonic Christianity. The call of missions is to a new faith in Jesus Christ. Professor Kraemer deprecates the widely prevalent aversion to evangelization and proselytism. "Sharing religious experience" and social service are no substitutes for evangelization. They are valid and valuable simply as approaches and as expressions of the Christian mind.

If we approach the non-Christian religions as total religious systems "there is only difference and antithesis." Trying to build bridges and trace similarities will not get us anywhere. The evangelistic approach has three aspects: "Evangelism, adaptation and service." First must be the Christian message and we must know what that is, even though we may seek to be sympathetic in giving it. Adaptation does not mean syncretism. Its problem "is that of the genuine translation of Christianity into indigenous terms." We need to find out where to do bridge-building and where to emphasize contrasts. Synthetic efforts are artificial and unreal. Dr. Kraemer indicates the varying approaches to the different religions. He regards China as the spot

requiring the most wisdom. The Japanese Christians live in "an extremely dangerous world" and are in a very delicate position, in the midst of the storm of religious nationalism.

The author's standpoint comes out clearly in his criticism of Hugh Vernon White's *A Theology for Christian Missions*, and in these two volumes we have a pretty good view of the contrasting American and Continental positions. In closing, Professor Kraemer modestly reminds us that the problem cannot be solved "by writing books." The need is of consecrated men and women in every region. The heartening lesson of history is that "the Gospel can spread under *any* circumstances, provided a living and ardent faith burns in the hearts of men."

No pastor or teacher can afford to neglect this volume. It needs to be read with a certain amount of unconcern for some of the author's theological bases. While Professor Kraemer partakes of Barthian positive ways of putting things, he does not betray the lack of intellectual humility that characterizes Barth, and the most liberal evangelical thinker will find relatively little to challenge in the more fundamental positions of this study, even though it may not measure up to its rather over-amplified characterization by the Archbishop of York.

Note: It may be of interest to indicate some of the conceptual differences between some American students and those of the Continent by the following excerpts from correspondence:

KRAEMER TO MACFARLAND

"You ask why I use the term 'upsets' when talking about the other conceptions of God. As far as

I know I constantly stressed in my book that the real content of the Christian revelation is, if one penetrates into the core, in flat contradiction to human expectations and ideas, and this also applies to what is said about God in the Bible. Therefore I use the term 'upsets.'

"I have been astonished that you more than once speak about a dualism in what I am saying about the relation of the Christian revelation to the non-Christian religions. It seems to me, that in my clear distinction between Christianity as a human historical reproduction of the divine revelation in Christ, and this revelation as such, there is no dualism. I think there is another difficulty involved, namely this, that it is at the present stage of theological discussion and at the present stage of achievement in the field of anthropology and the history of religions, rather difficult to explain in a short space that one can fully acknowledge God's working in the world, also in the non-Christian world, and fully acknowledge the religious and moral achievements of non-Christians, and at the same time maintain that these are no road to or initial developments of the revelation in Christ."

MACFARLAND TO KRAEMER

"In your use of the word 'upsets' I should say that you overstate,. In other words, that all 'revelation' is one whole, even though we may not see the relationship between the various forms taken by revelation. There are, of course, differences of degree which are so great that they become differences in kind. However, I should prefer to say 'transcends' and 'modifies' instead of 'upsets.' I

could not accept the words you use in your letter to me, 'flat contradiction.'

"In my references to your seeming 'dualism,' I have the feeling that you lose sight of the unity and continuity of history. Your dualism, (if there is any) is not at the points you make in your letter. I think you are again dualistic in the contradiction you find between different religions, in that you allow for no relationship between God's revelation to Christian and non-Christian religions. Again I think you lose sight of the unity and continuity of history.

"I suppose my comments are motivated by my feeling that you have fallen into the Barthian mazes of antitheses further than I should wish to be carried. Your more fundamental propositions can hardly be challenged. It is your deductions from them on which we differ."

KRAEMER TO MACFARLAND

"I feel that we approach the whole problem of the relation of the Gospel towards all other world-systems from a quite different angle. Your method and the general American method is to try to build bridges and indicate connection lines and if it is possible to construe syntheses. I myself quite agree that this is not only possible but also according to facts when we compare the different Christian views of life that are derived from the Gospel with other life-systems. However, my impression remains that you do not give sufficient weight to my contention that the Gospel and the content of the Revelation in Christ are of a quite different order.

Skraemer on 10 May
"It strikes me always that American liberal

thinking is unconsciously evading this point because it is far more intent on finding out the human and humanizing character of the Gospel. That is in my opinion also the reason that Barth, as I take it from your book *Trends of Christian Thinking*, is not really understood. You are quite right that Barth is far too much dressing up his message in an armour of dialectics that serve more to obscure it than to explain it; but, notwithstanding that, I believe that Barth is one of the greatest modern minds that is giving in a very deep and prophetic way voice to the core of Christianity. It seems to me that America is not understanding this and minimizing too much his importance is doing damage to itself."

4. A MEDIATING VIEW BETWEEN OLD AND NEW WORLD THEOLOGY

There is more receptiveness to Continental thought in Scotland than in Britain, although I believe there are no Barthians on Scotch faculties.

In *REVELATION AND RESPONSE*, by Professor Edgar P. Dickie of the University of St. Andrews, we thus have a mediating study between the Barthian doctrine of transcendence and that of immanence, as generally held by American thinkers. Professor Dickie was a student of Karl Heim, has translated his works and reveals his influence on his students.⁵ Space forbids any attempts to follow his arguments for his position, and the best the reviewer can do is to summarize his conclusions.

Dr. Dickie acknowledges a debt to Continental theology, which he analyzes with criticism from point to

⁵ For a study of Heim, see the author's *Trends of Christian Thinking*.

point, in that it forces us back to the kind of "fresh examination of basic theological principles" which he attempts—an admission which would be readily made by even the severest critics of the theology of "Crisis."

The mood of to-day, in so far as one can determine it among the "unresolved contradictions existing side by side" in the welter of opinions and convictions, is experimental rather than adventurous. "The exaltation of human reason is found alongside the purest irrationalism." So far as religiously neutral thinkers are concerned, we find "the unconscious and habitual Christian ethic" and a recognition of "the ineradicable religiosity of man." Religion faces a double challenge; by those who affirm man's own power to set himself right; and those who find the ideas of a righteous God and the need of man's redemption to be "only spectres of a diseased imagination."

In the search for knowledge "only the pure in heart shall see God," and only those whose spirit is humble and who recognize a superior will to which obedience is given, can find the truth. Even neutral thinkers agree, with Albert Manridge, that "there is no court of appeal more readily admitted than the teachings of Jesus." As for the Naturalists, nature has "gone on insisting that men shall be born with all their transcendental longings incorrigibly active."

The chief concern of all non-believers is personal self-realization. But natural ethics do not provide a sufficient reason for the survival of ethical ideals. "Man discovers the need of some loyalty other than that determined by self," whether he finds it in a totalitarian State or in some higher ideal. Science itself has created an attitude of disillusionment, with the laboratory as the place where "reality" may be found. Neither the psychology of "Behaviourism," nor that of the

“Unconscious,” the belief that religion is the outcome of neurosis, can meet the demands of experience; the fact that “what all men have in some degree the best have in the highest degree.” These psychologies fail to account for the survival of religion.

Does morality find its initiative in man himself? Can a theory of morals which finds the principle of right conduct in reason and its autonomy deal adequately with “the phenomena of the evil will”? Moral values are personal; they inhere in persons and must have “a personal source and sustainer.” Morality flows, “not from the nature of man, but from the nature of God. The divine indicative precedes the divine imperative.” It is thus in the experience of redemption that man “is made capable of seeing the good and of doing it.” “The human *Ought* is intelligible only because of the divine *Is*.”

Whence, then, authority and assurance? “In spiritual matters certitude belongs not to reason but to love.” “In the sphere of religious knowledge,” “only the good man can understand the goodness of God,” through obedience and consecration. It is when the mind is humble, reverent, and receptive that it is open to the deepest convictions. Nevertheless, “the self must stand secure and autonomous.” “We must not put out a person’s eye and then persuade him to see with some one else’s eye.” While man’s reason may doubt, even in the highest forms of experience, this is not any failure of the divine revelation nor is it due to any essential incomprehensibility of the Word of God. “Final certitude, indeed, is not to be looked for where none is in perfect communion with God.”

Nevertheless, reason is not to be ousted by feeling. Even though there be mystery, it is “a mystery revealed.” “A God who was utterly incomprehensible

could not be the object of trust and love." "If the mind of man plays no part, then only a mechanized inspiration, magically enforced, is left to us." Reason always points forward, however, to something higher than itself, in which alone reason can become complete. "Reason without revelation is not reasonable." "Like faith, reason also is from without, from above, from the 'Wholly Other.'" (A term whose use seems to invalidate the author's conception of man.) Religion is always "*suprarational*." The author thus seeks the middle course between Rudolf Otto and Karl Barth. He finds some refuge in what he terms Karl Heim's "*Bethel hypothesis*" on transcendence.

We find "no external and final authority either in Church or in Scripture," in the way of proof, but we may find God. The only "credential of the prophet and of the Church is not tradition, but spiritual reliability."

Revelation in history is found in the faith of Christianity. "History, in itself relative, is found to have absolute significance by its reference to the Person of Christ." "Revelation was consummated, not in a perfect doctrine," "but in a Person." Even mystical religion is not independent of history; the historic Christ is "the contemporary of us all." Christianity did not begin with a belief in messianism but with a Messiah. Thus history is a domain in which God brings reality to pass.

The newer "Form-Criticism," Professor Dickie contends, strengthens faith in Christ, when rightly conceived. "It is the testimony not of historians, but of the histories of souls," regardless of what may have been the limitations of Gospel writers.

Discussing the "Theology of Crisis," the author concludes that this theology "meets the challenge of the

relativist with the declaration that revelation gives a fixed point, an absolute," which is "not open to testing" by metaphysics, or "by anything else whatsoever except revelation." Barth's *Urgeschichte* (super-historical) theory is of little if any value.

Karl Heim finds a "new dimension," in which truth appears as paradox to those who are blind "to the dimension in which it lies." In this ultimate dimension, "God is the 'Thou' of every 'I.'" Barth and Heim differ, in that with the former "religious experience" is only the apprehension of the apparent impossibility of redemption," while with Heim it is "part of the redemptive process." In the last analysis, our author concludes, "our investigation is only as deep as our love; our grasp of truth is measurable by our obedience."

The "Finality of the Christian Gospel" lies in its idea of God and in a redemption which "leaves no profound and legitimate longing unfulfilled." Jesus taught with authority, is "Judge of mankind," the pattern of faith. The finality of the Christian faith is deeper than its morals and piety. "We have to think of God in terms of Christ, *sub specie Christi*." Jesus Christ gives light on time and eternity, on good and evil; His commands "are bound up with our eternal destiny"; our salvation and our security are in Him. In Christ "eternity has broken into time."

Far be it from the reviewer to pretend that he was always able to follow the author's analyses of—say Barth and Heim—any more than he can always grasp the antitheses of these two thinkers. But he could generally get the result reached. As for Dr. Dickie's general conclusions, they are about what the ordinary, everyday, simple-minded Christian has felt through his own religious experience and not much more. He

knows that what he desires is not always best and that, without calling it "revelation," he is guided, when humble and obedient, to the best, without and within, and that it comes from a Being other, even if not "*wholly other*" than himself.

By a discriminating analysis, Dr. Dickie has opened up the way for a more constructive statement of his own positions, for which we may well hope.

5. THE TRAGEDY OF HISTORY; AND BEYOND

One hardly keeps up with current thought, as well as with its change—often on the part of Niebuhr himself—without consulting Reinhold Niebuhr. In BEYOND TRAGEDY Niebuhr has gone beyond all his previous books in a series of essays which, at first sight and until we have finished them, seem baffling in the involved thought which always characterizes this stimulating writer.

These "sermonic essays" have running through them the theme of "Christianity's dialectical conception of time and eternity, of God and the world, of nature and grace." The biblical view of life "affirms the meaning of history and of man's natural existence on the one hand, and on the other insists that the centre, source and fulfilment of history lie beyond history." Christianity affirms naturalistic philosophies in so far as they "insist on the meaningfulness of historical existence." It refutes them when they express the belief that "the temporal process explains and fulfills itself." "Each moment of history stands under and in eternity, but neither exhausts nor fulfills the eternal."

Orthodox Christianity, however, has petrified mythical and dialectical biblical thought when it developed "a supernaturalism which conceives of two discrete realms of being, the natural and the supernatural."

Professor Niebuhr's title for the book is explained by his thesis "that the Christian view of history passes through the sense of the tragic to a hope and an assurance which is 'beyond tragedy.' " In the very statement of his theme, one can thus sense Niebuhr's realistic view of the life, civilization and culture of the contemporary world. "Christianity's view of history is tragic in so far as it recognizes evil as an inevitable concomitant of even the highest spiritual enterprises. It is beyond tragedy in so far as it does not regard evil as inherent in existence itself but as finally under the domination of a good God."

The effort to reproduce in a brief review of this book the dialectics, the analogies, the unusual and sometimes strained interpretations and applications of Scripture, in any coherent form, might as well be given up. I can do little more than touch its content here and there, in illustration of Dr. Niebuhr's underlying theme, "the Christian interpretation of history."

Resting upon Paul's description of the ministers of the Gospel, "as deceivers yet true," we are told that "what is true in the Christian religion can be expressed only in symbols which contain a certain degree of provisional and superficial deception." Christianity has transmuted primitive religious and artistic myths and symbols without fully rationalizing them. The creation, the fall of man, the incarnation, the final judgment, cannot be fully rationalized. We are "deceivers, yet true," when we proclaim the coming Kingdom. While we do not believe in a tragic conclusion, "our hope lies not in human capacity," but "in the character of the ultimate reality."

The Tower of Babel myth reveals the truth that "its pretentious disregard" of human limitations is not seen from the inside by groups "who have compounded par-

tial insights and particular interests with eternal and universal values." The "final act" of this sort of tragedy is being enacted in Spain to-day, "where an anachronistic feudalism is perishing amidst the terrible passions and fratricidal conflicts of a civil war." The merchants of our social order built a Tower of Babel under their conviction "that religion was primarily an instrument of social injustice and that it always gave an unjustified halo of sanctity to the partial and relative values of a particular society." "Thus the bourgeois world which began by puncturing the illusions and pretensions of the feudal world ends by involving itself in the same illusions." As to our religious culture, believing in a God who transcends human knowledge, it raises the Tower of Babel a little higher when it believes "that its own human knowledge can comprehend this transcendence and its human conscience express its imperatives."

In God's punishment of the builders of the tower, by confounding their language, "we have another mythical profundity which is not literal truth and yet is profoundly true." The languages of Germany and France are "freighted with the long sad story of conflict" between those "who view each other across a chasm deeper than any chasm of nature." But, "the primitive sense of guilt" expressed in the Babel myth "is the fruit of an insight too profound for modernity's superficial intelligence."

The symbols of "the Ark and the Temple" are significant. "The god of a culture and a civilization" is always "the god of the ark which accompanies the warrior."

There is "no method by which men can extricate themselves so completely from the warfare of human existence as to be worthy of building a temple dedicated

to the God in whose bosom we learn 'the nothingness of all human victories.' " It was not Solomon's goodness, but David's uneasy conscience that built the temple. "Unfortunately the Christian Church manages only occasionally to relate the ark to the temple."

Following a graphic description of the heroic story of Micaiah, Dr. Niebuhr, referring to the four hundred prophets who advised war, reminds us that "the history of the Christian Church is replete with the embarrassing submissions of prophets and priests to the pride and arrogance of nations and rulers." "The sin of man arises from his effort to establish his own security; and the sin of the false prophet lies in the effort to include this false security within the ultimate security of faith." The false security to which all men are tempted is that of power, and all power leads to pride and injustice. "The prophet is under compulsion to speak a woe, not only upon specific forms of human injustice but upon the human heart for its perennial injustice and the recurring tragedy of its self-defeating sin." "A dominant class must be told that there is no security in increasing oppression of a resentful oppressed class." As to our own day in world relations, the false prophet "imagines that commercial and trading nations have discovered the law of mutuality by which social enmity is destroyed. They glorify the prudent internationalism of the trader." The temptations to false prophecy are ubiquitous and drive us to despair. Flagrant pride is condemned while its subtle forms are condoned; overt injustice is outlawed, while covert forms of it are sanctioned; power is recognized as a tentative necessity; injustice is complacently accepted as an inevitable consequence or in order to encourage illusory hopes. We are all at times these false prophets. Therefore "the Church can disturb the se-

curity of sinners only if it is not itself too secure" in its assurance. The true prophet will sense himself as being under the very judgment he proclaims.

Where, then, rests our ultimate trust? "It is significant that the profoundest expressions of prophetic religion come out of periods of catastrophe." We cannot place our trust in achievement of the human spirit. Faith is imperilled by either despair or optimism. The latter is the more dangerous. The apocalypticism of early Christianity was a culmination of the prophetic movement. It "regarded human history as meaningful but not as self-fulfilling or self-sufficing." Medievalism "mixed faith in God and trust in man" and called it a "'Christian' civilization." Protestantism trusted in "pious man." The conclusion was reached "that what made human beings dangerous, unjust and unreliable was precisely their religious faith." Therefore modern civilization switched its faith to the intelligent, the educated man. Liberal Protestantism trusted the man who is both pious and intelligent.

Then, after the war, trust was imposed in the youth of the coming generation, but if we look to Europe to-day, that confidence was misplaced. The most recent form of humanism, accepted by millions, is trust in the poor man, exemplified in the Marxian faith in the proletariat.

But, says Dr. Niebuhr, no matter what form his goodness takes, we cannot put our trust in man to reveal our confidence in the goodness of life. "The Christian faith in the goodness of God is not to be equated with confidence in the virtue of man." "The best antidote for the bitterness of a disillusioned trust in man is disillusionment in the self. This is the disillusionment of true repentance."

Jesus placed a premium on childlikeness. Maturity

"may mean death as well as life" and "it is obvious that something of the genius of childhood must be retained and recaptured as we grow into maturity." We lose childlike innocence, unity and sincerity. But "to become as a little child cannot mean to recapture its innocence." The best we can hope for is that the repentant man will check his evil tendencies. The Christian religion offers him "a challenge to a higher honesty and morality and the consciousness of an unattained purity" which can come only from God.

In the present crisis of our social history, we have the Fascists seeking "to escape the complexities of modern civilization by returning to childhood"; the Communists are "wrong in imagining that perfect innocence is a possibility for man's natural history." "Spiritual health in both individuals and societies is an achievement of maturity in which some excellency of childhood is consciously reclaimed, after being lost in the complexities of life."

Under the title, "Christianity and Tragedy," Dr. Niebuhr takes as his text the weeping of the women of Jerusalem and Jesus' response, "Weep not for me. Weep for yourselves and for your children." "We love what is weak and suffers. It appeals to our strength without challenging it. But we also revere those who suffer because of their strength or nobility." "Our greatest reverence is reserved for the strength which we can pity because it is too pure to be triumphant."

Christianity transcends tragedy. Its Saviour "dies not because He has sinned but because He has not sinned." "He proved thereby that sin is so much a part of existence that sinlessness cannot maintain itself in it." What Jesus reveals about life "transmutes tears of self-pity into tears of remorse and repentance."

Jesus rejected the political idea of messiahship. His Kingdom was one in which the King of love is crucified. His Kingdom of God "enters the world in tragic terms." It must continue to enter the world "by way of the Crucifixion." The final element in Jesus' conception of the Kingdom of God is that He was not only the suffering servant, but also "'Son of man.'" "Christianity transmutes the tragedy of history" into a revelation of God "as the goal of human existence."

Christianity thus transvalues historical values. The estimates of history upon human achievements are overturned. "'Not many noble are called.'" The noble are not "'called'" "because they sprinkle rose-water on the cesspools of injustice and because they clothe tyrannical power with broadcloth" and fool themselves and others by their pretensions.

They are subjected at times to judgments which reveal them "hidden behind the decencies" of history's "political rituals and cultural amenities." Neither are the wise "called." Wisdom, like power, leads to pride. "'The things which are not hath God chosen, to put to nought the things that are.'" This is the climax. The mighty and the wise have all failed. The substitution of a God of reason and nature for the God of revealed religion seemed to be "'according to knowledge.'" But in reality it was a rationalistic humanism whose validity as a faith is refuted by history. All we have to do is to look at its contemporary results, especially in Europe. To be sure, this humanism did correct errors of religious dogmatism and was by no means all wrong. Prophetic religion must appreciate many of the affirmations of humanism. There are also false anti-humanistic theologies.

The trouble is that rationalistic humanism "forgets the finiteness and creatureliness of man," and does not

subject human righteousness to the transcendent righteousness of God, a God who is "not the construct of human reason but the presupposition of all thought and life." It "seeks to construct a Christ out of some universal human virtue or capacity." Christian humility "does not destroy moral ardour." "It merely destroys moral arrogance and prevents righteousness from degenerating into self-righteousness."

In reality, "every high type of righteousness is accompanied by its own characteristic sin." "Not only," moreover, "is there an element of positive evil in the most virtuous life," but "we are also equally sinners . . . because we all fall short in terms of our sins of omission." Consequently the problem of life had no solution on the purely moral level. "Love is both the fulfilment and the negation of law." "Forgiveness is the highest justice and the end of justice."

We see now the meaning of Jesus' answer to Pilate: "'My kingdom is not of this world.'" The world has been alienated from its true character. But the Kingdom is *in* this world, in man's uneasy conscience. The spiritual resistance of brave churchmen in Germany is in contrast to the yielding of the universities to corruption. The universities rested their Kingdom on the human wisdom of this world and have been conquered by this world. "The only Kingdom which can defy and conquer the world is one which is not of this world."

No book has come into my hands for a long time which is more rewarding than this as a call to penitence. I could point out some of the exaggerations in its paradoxes and could quote sentences which are so involved that they are enigmatic. But all this is lost in the searching quality of the thought. Niebuhr has given us the best of what is in Barthianism far better than

Barth has done it or could do it. He is relatively free from Barth's violent antitheses.

There are ponderous sentences which might be lifted out of each chapter and formed into a congeries of immutable laws supported by a realism which forbids any gainsaying. While weighted with dark pictures of human nature, of sin and judgment, the book leaves us in all the more vivid contrast of God and redemption.

One has but to review history as the author illustrates by it and then to witness the contemporary world, in order to see that "Christianity's view of history is tragic in so far as it recognizes evil as an inevitable concomitant of even the highest spiritual enterprises. It is beyond tragedy in as far as it does not regard evil as inherent in existence itself, but as finally under the dominion of a good God."

Niebuhr's earlier volumes have been those of a man perturbed, not to say distracted, shifting from right to left and then from left to right. This one, although strangely enough composed of sermons given at different times, almost reaches a welcome coherency and sustained continuity.

6. THE HOUR ABOUT TO STRIKE

A long shelf of books has described the great conferences at Oxford and Edinburgh in 1937. My long-time associate, Adolf Keller, in his charming reminiscent volume, *Von Geist und Liebe*, says, in concluding a chapter on ecumenism, "*Es ist heute klar geworden . . . dass die Welt nicht von der Wirtschaft her; sondern vom Geist und der Liebe her Erlösung suchen muss.*"

In FIVE MINUTES TO TWELVE, Keller has given us

an interpretative message that ought to follow the reading of any or all of the conference studies.

These assemblies combined have a double aspect. One is the effort to Christianize a secularized world by thinking and organizing. The other was the effort to let God "accomplish what we could not attain by an effort of our will—Mary sitting at the feet of the Master."

Solitude and reflection must now rethink all of the wealth of information that was gathered and the stupendous amount of theological thinking that ensued. We must not let the critical voices all come from *without*, as we have all along been doing, but from *within*. "The spiritual harvest of Oxford and Edinburgh *upon rigid examination* (italics mine), seems to be less doubtful than the gain in theological or ecclesiastical unity." This is "the real inner impulse for all future activity." "We could not store up this grace for the following day by converting it into theological cognition, or lasting institutes, or continuing experience." "We did not have God's grace in our power or handling."

The problem now is, is such an experience as that at Oxford and Edinburgh communicable to our churches? The sovereign need of to-day is not organization or theology; it is Christian witness, not just the thought of our "best thinkers."

We are at the end of institutions, values and formulas of economic and social systems once cherished. We had forgotten that the Bible does *not* speak of evolution, "but rather of a Judgment Day." We had forgotten that man is "a prey to evil spirits if he neglects that protection which the Holy Spirit alone can give." To-day we discover that what seemed like a fulness of human life is really emptiness "because the values which count, which give weight and depth and

gravity, the moral values, faith in God—these are evaporating.” Our idealistic assumptions have given way to a sense of helplessness and we find ourselves “hitting our heads against unseen walls.” The territory formerly occupied by reason, intellect and morality has been taken possession of by demons.

The religious nature of humanistic philosophies is a judgment on our so-called Christian society. Their devotees to-day are more willing to sacrifice for them than Christians are willing to do for their ideals. The humanistic leaders have their own messianism, without any Messiah. For this Messiah they offer men a class or a State into which they have put a mystical meaning.

To be sure, we have had a constructive idealism. But we have put too much trust in its transforming power, as America did when it entered a war to make the world safe for democracy. Our “Social Gospel” has gone little farther than to declare principles and creeds. We had a League of Nations, highly endowed with intellect and a wise Court of Justice. They have failed. This constructive idealism gave us the illusion of the Versailles Treaty.

Our philosophic idealism “has come to an end to-day in its philosophical and Christian form,” and left us surveying the reality of evil and sin, which it forgot.

To all this what has the Church of Christ to offer? First of all a transcendent God, who is still with us, though unseen and unrealized. The hope of the Oxford and Edinburgh conferences was in the consciousness that the living Christ rose above them. Our former liberal and humanistic conceptions disappeared. It was in our worship that we “opened a new way toward each other,” as our theological thinking had failed to do. This thinking varied because it was determined by affinity to one’s own character. “The appeal from

theological thinking to the power and tribunal of the Holy Spirit prepared an understanding where theoretical discussion failed."

This consciousness of the conferences Dr. Keller describes as "a seismograph for the spiritual experience of present-day Christianity." "In the theological despair of Edinburgh, the deepest spiritual experience found its expression in that pentecostal cry of present-day Christianity: *Veni Creator Spiritus.*" Our blessing was not something "static, a 'datum,' a formula, a theology, an organization, or project."

Thus we had a vision of a new Church, to take the place of a dying one. We saw the end of religious idealism and optimism. "The Church of power, of national or class limitation, of success and security has come to an end." We even ask whether Protestantism can become a Church at all. "The most terrifying experience occurs when the Church will not let the Church be the Church, the Church of Christ, but makes it the Church of tradition, of a certain theology, of some ecclesiastical faction, of a social or religious program, a man-made Church of human good will and pious fellowship." Oxford and Edinburgh dismissed "synthetic fusion" and compromise. They departed from "the nineteenth century synthesis of Gospel and Culture, between the Church and the World," which had led "toward the assimilation of the Church by the world." This new Church "of faith" lives in Russia, in private homes, and is being born in Germany.

The struggle of our day goes much deeper than economic or social or political conflicts. It is a war of religions. The future battle will not be between Protestant bodies or between Protestant and Catholic. It will be "between Christendom and paganism, between Christ and Antichrist." The supreme contemporary

question is: Will the world leave the path of humanism and secularism and try the Gospel?

While there are seeming extravagances in this volume, the reviewer knows that the author would easily put them in perspective were he to analyze things for which his condemnation seems too violent. That the reader will need to assume, as well as that Dr. Keller throughout is speaking in relative terms. When one is penetrating as searchingly as Keller does, he need not detour from his main highway in order to explain, and thus obscure the main issues. These stand out so that even the laziest-minded reader will lay the book aside with trembling, although if he sees its meaning, it will not be with fear.

And we may fittingly close this section of our own study, with this appeal for the real *Erlösung* of the Church, in its search for a Christian Faith in a day of crisis.

V

THE SEARCH FOR CONTINUITY

The more or less standardized “crisis” and “dialectical” theologians are not the only thinkers of our day to whom we may look for light. There are those who will not break with evolution, even in the day of a backward sweeping cycle. They, too, calmer and more sedate, are men who have not been under the disturbing influence of disillusion, often because they were not so illusioned by the current of thought in the last half of the eighteenth century. They see much to conserve in it and much of it that may be restated. They conceive of the universe in terms of unity and continuity.

In his massive volume, “Dieu dans l’Univers,” the late Victor Monod of the University of Strasbourg, says: “Le conflit entre le Dieu cherché dans l’ espace et le Dieu cherché dans le temps m’a paru constituer la trame résistante et continue de l’histoire du problème de Dieu. Si l’espace cesse de nous apparaître comme une donnée ultime et indépassable, si l’Univers tout entier est histoire, si le Dieu de la nature est un penseur avant d’être un géomètre, la séculaire antithèse s’évanouit et nous apercevons un seul et même Dieu, dans la conscience et dans la nature.”

I. A MODERNIST DEFINES HIS MODERNISM

My one-time colleague, Alfred E. Garvie, Principal Emeritus of Hackney and New College, in **THE CHRISTIAN FAITH**, while not mentioning Barth, or his school, except by indirection, nevertheless complies with the demand for a theology as he gives us the result of a

half century of thinking. He largely accepts the issues raised by the "crisis" theologians, but meets them by affirming many of the very theological modes of thought which they decry. He deplores the "reactionary and sectarian tendencies in Christian theology today."

Principal Garvie, however, does not intend to follow the *method* "of the systems of theology of former days," believing that much in them must be excluded in a "doctrine of God." At the same time, "any theology which can claim to be Christian must be trinitarian," or as Dr. Garvie prefers "triunitarian," and it must be *Christocentric*. He also believes "in the *apologetic* approach to dogmatics, just as in the *ethical* issue." Thus far Barth and Garvie are in general agreed.

But near the very beginning, Principal Garvie is led to "reject *entirely* (italics mine) a theology which so distinguishes as to separate God from man, or as to oppose man to God." God is "other than man" because He is holy, while man is sinful, but "God as Love in His Fatherhood bridges the yawning gulf." He is "*transcendent*" beyond human thought, but also "*immanent*," and "in his seeking of God, man is developing his capacity to be found of God."

Dr. Garvie thus has "a standpoint which differs entirely from some contemporary schools of theology, which seem to have a fascination for many younger minds, who, not having bought their freedom from the older types of theology at a great price, do not prize that freedom . . . and want to get back to a theological shelter."

"Faith" to this author "means the exercise of the whole personality, belief, trust, surrender," and "man has as personal the capacity to receive and respond." Garvie desires to be modern but distinguishes himself

from an iconoclastic Modernism. He values science in its "proper province." He is a "modern" in that he recognizes literary and historical criticism; uses texts historically, not dogmatically; recognizes the value of the creeds, but not as having "absoluté authority"; accepts "the function of science in explaining phenomena and of philosophy in seeking to interpret reality as a whole"; but maintains that "a theistic theory is alone adequate to meet the demands of thought itself." He recognizes values in other religions, but would not reduce the Christian Faith to an "ethical monotheism."

Following these principles, Dr. Garvie, in discussing "Nature and Man," tells us that "the functions of physical science and of theology are different"; one explains nature, the other the "divine revelation." At the same time, with the Barthians, he agrees that "Christian theologians have, since the open warfare of the last century ended, been rather too obsequious in their deference to science."

In his appreciation of the values man discovers in nature, Dr. Garvie finds "the moral ideal, goodness." While it was a "tragic mistake" for Christian theology to challenge "scientific hypothesis or conjecture," it was also, for example, equally inept for psychoanalysts to modify or abandon the Christian doctrines of sin and guilt. "But there is a natural religion which . . . is an enrichment of the evangelical." An emphasis on this aspect of nature is needed, "in view of certain deplorable conditions . . . in the civilization and culture of to-day." (Thus what Barth considers only as disease, Garvie would use as the remedy.) Man has made himself unworthy, but "a reactionary theology which talks about a 'fallen world' as if man were always and only vile is irreverent." "I feel bound," he says, "to enter a *caveat* against a morbid depreciation of man."

Principal Garvie, however, does not fall into a *naturalism*, "which treats man as only a part of nature" and neglects "the testimony of morality and religion as compared with science." "Naturalism is a decapitated philosophy, a trunk without a head." The pit of *humanism* is likewise avoided; a lofty estimate of man is "not contradictory of that estimate of man" which emphasizes "his insufficiency and dependence." "The final argument against humanism lies in the religious consciousness."

Under "Religion and Revelation" we have again a very different idea of revelation, or at least of man's capacity to receive it, from that of Barth. "Religion is most fully expressed in worship," "which must not be thought of subjectively as only man's approach and appeal to God, but also as God's presence and activity in man." And Dr. Garvie adds, "I am writing in conscious opposition to any theological tendency which depreciates human religion that it may exalt divine revelation, and even treats religion as an obstacle to, and not a channel for, revelation." "No less am I writing in conscious opposition to those who hold that Christianity alone is altogether true and all other religions altogether false."

We get our truest view of revelation by considering the nature of the God who reveals Himself. "God is past finding out by human searching." But we may know much about Him, and "if God enters into personal relations with man . . . we must also affirm the divine immanence." "God is not a god who shrouds himself in impenetrable darkness," and man is active in receiving as God is in giving. "Revelation is as universal, permanent and essential as is religion." But, although God is in His world, "morality and religion alike forbid the confusion of immanence with identity

in the relation of God to the world." Transcendence and immanence are combined in God's *omnipresence, omniscience and omnipotence*.

The author's Christology has all the certitude of that of Brunner (*Der Mittler*), but in contrast to Barth's inclusion of the Virgin Birth as a basal fact in his Dogmatics, and equally dissenting from Robert E. Speer's positive position,¹ Dr. Garvie says: "The evidence for the *Virgin Birth* is so inconclusive that its theological significance (if any) need not be discussed, although the Incarnation would seem less complete if the birth of Jesus was unlike that of other men." The author's summing up of "Christ and the Cross" is positive, but he says: "I do not use the language of the creeds because it does not satisfy me. I am trying to express what I believe to be more than the Nicene faith." We must, however, "pronounce inadequate a religion of Jesus which makes Him only an example or subject and not the *object* of faith."

Considering "The Spirit and the Church," Dr. Garvie gives us his view of Triunity (his preferential term). Jesus spoke of the *Kingdom* rather than of the Church, and the Church is "both *object* and *organ* of the Kingdom of God." Christian life "expresses itself in two forms of action, in *worship* and in *morality*." The latter is a social obligation. While Garvie believes with Barth that the world *crisis* is God's judgment, he is far from Barth's disparagement of Social Christianity. At the same time, with the crisis theologians, he believes that "the Church has a higher claim than the State." Summing up, however, he tells us that on the European continent, "the spirit of Lot's wife prevails, 'looking backward.'" Escape is sought in escha-

¹Dr. Speer's *The Meaning of Christ to Me*, is reviewed in *Trends of Christian Thinking*.

tology and apocalypticism. Even demonology is being revived.

That the world is called to repentance and obedience to God no one can doubt. But Dr. Garvie "cannot believe that the final judgment is upon us."

In this review I have not attempted to give an adequate summary of Principal Garvie's faith. It is that of the modern, liberal thinker who has succumbed neither to materialistic science nor to modernistic complacency, nor, again, to humanistic self-assurance. Neither has he shared the disillusionment of the once illusioned. He accepts the Barthian analysis of the evils of the day, but does not root them in the same causes, nor find their remedies in Barth's prescriptions. In his *magnum opus*, *The Christian Belief in God* and in his *The Christian Ideal for Human Society* the reader will find what I have given in outline developed with the fuller richness of his mind.

2. CHRISTIANITY THE FINAL ANSWER TO THE SOCIAL ORDER

Canon F. R. Barry joins the chorus of demands for the renascence of theology to meet the *humanologies* of our day, in **WHAT HAS CHRISTIANITY TO SAY?** The "titanic forces which are smashing in the gateway of history" can be met only by the authority of the queen of sciences.

A mere revival of traditional views will not meet the issue in this iron age. Just as the older creeds were formulated for the heresies of their day, so must we face the economic, moral and political heresies now sweeping over our world. We cannot preserve Christianity within the walls of our Churches; it has got to deal with contemporary philosophies of man and his destiny. "Christians are once more in a small minority

in a world in which their axioms are discredited" and their view of life proclaimed incredible and treasonable. The odds against them seem overwhelming, and if they stand on the defensive, they will go down.

We can meet these modern heresies only by giving a truer world-view than they do. If we can make God sovereign, then there is One that the State itself must obey and the State cannot claim man's allegiance at its will. The Christian contribution to contemporary life is faith—faith in a true God. "Sheer political necessity is driving us back on the Christian religion."

Human freedom is at stake; this is the issue between democracy and the Power States. If man is no other than "merely a product of natural processes," biological or economic, rather than a spiritual being in a universe that protects persons, nothing is secure for him. "The political problems of our time are fundamentally moral and religious"; the claims of our adversaries are themselves religious. "Faith and freedom are bound up together." Apart from Christianity they fail. It is "only faith in God," to-day, "which can again create the mental climate in which mankind can settle its differences by rational argument and negotiation" in a world now "abandoning belief in reason," and because of this "approaching spiritual bankruptcy."

Only if God is sovereign, does history have meaning. Fatalism is the alternative to faith. Politics and Christianity both depend on the kind of God worshipped. "Everything turns on what we mean by God." When the Church "declared that Jesus is the Son of God, what it really means was—God is like *that*; he that hath seen Him has seen the Father." That is what must be set over against modern idolatry of nation, race and class as absolutes.

Only when we know God can we know man, His

creature, in our dehumanized civilization. "The Christian valuation of man rests on faith in God and immortality." A naturalistic theory of man cannot justify any moral freedom. "We cannot start from physics and biology and arrive at last at a Christian theology." Man is not a god, nor is he just an animal; "he has a soul still in the making." Human life has been made negligible because it has been stricken off from God.

Modern political leaders see no way out of the "obscenity" and "outrage" of war, and thus we drift into "moral skepticism." Men see no standards by which to measure anything and often conclude that, "whatever we do the world will go to —." They have in the meantime tried to build an international order on self-interest.

Christianity is something more than a mere "relative morality bound up with a stage of social evolution." It has nothing to offer so "slick and arrogant" as its rival programs. It rests its case on "God's advancing purpose for His world." It is timeless; "the attempt to shape the life of human societies by ends which are set wholly in this world will inevitably mislead and destroy them."

It is going to take hard intellectual discipline on the part of Christians to find the needed standards and apply them to our disordered world. They are not in a moral code, in rules of conduct. They are in "a living Person," before whom we must kneel. Christians must seek to discover God's will.

Some Continental thinkers have become so desperate that they find an easy way by concluding that the social order never was the field and task of the Church. But there surely is a more courageous will and way for Christians. "Man's life is not that of an angel or a pure spirit, any more than it is a merely natural prod-

uct." "Like the State and society itself, it is at once natural and spiritual; and the Christian life has to be embodied within the order of nature and history, in the actual structure of social organization." The Christian cannot get away from the sense of personal responsibility. He may have to compromise at times, but he can make some contribution to the need of the world.

"The disappointment of good men to-day with the Church of Christ turns on the ambiguity of its moral witness and its seeming failure to embody its professed standards in its own life." But if it ever "comes alive again, consecrated to its own standard, living by the Lordship of Jesus, no power on earth would be able to withstand it." Our author closes with this note of confidence and hope, a volume whose directness, simplicity and profundity of thought would give the preacher several subjects and sermons.²

3. AN OLD THEOLOGY RESTATED AND RESTORED

As I got more and more deeply into Dean W. R. Matthews' *THE PURPOSE OF GOD*, I could easily have imagined myself back at Yale forty-five years ago. And I confess that it was not altogether an unsatisfactory diversion from some of the rather dilettante theologians of our day.

President George W. Richards recently wrote that he could not "refrain from asking, after one has read scores of books and conversations on God and the pathways to certainty, whether we are nearer the ultimate reality than was Plato, Paul, St. Thomas, or Kant."³ I confess to sharing this feeling at times—for the mo-

² For Barry's view of the Church see *Trends of Christian Thinking*.

³ In *American Philosophies of Religion*, Henry N. Wieman and Bernard E. Meland, Willett, Clark & Co., 1936.

ment. Whatever we may say of the other three, Dean Matthews goes further back than Kant, and believes that he has restored to positiveness much that Emmanuel Kant believed that his critique had disproved, —in his revivification of rational proof, particularly the argument from design.

The author, however, restates the teleological theory in the light of implications of modern science and contemporary knowledge. The questions he attempts to answer, with both affirmation and evidence are: Can we discern a purposeful universe? Can we trace this purposefulness to creative mind?

Rational proofs were either discarded or regarded as secondary by Kantian philosophers. But "the reign of Kant is coming to an end" and "the time is plainly ripe for a reconsideration of the traditional 'proofs' of Theism," that "reason could lead us to God."

Dr. Matthews says that, despite Kant and others, "the 'Teleological Argument' has always made the most direct appeal to the mass of mankind." Following an analysis of the Ontological and Cosmological Arguments and the criticism of them, the author concludes that "the argument from design" receives support from the other two and that it "has a necessary though subordinate place" in Theism.

The classical formulation of the design argument is given. In it there are two stages—the establishment of "the actual presence of teleological process in the world," and the consequent principle that no other ground is adequate "except a transcendent and purposive Mind."

The general objections, including the criticisms of Hume and Kant, are faced and all theories of "emergent evolution" are refuted as "a transparent disguise for the idea of immanent teleology." Then follows a

“reconsideration” of the teleological argument, the thinking out of the implications of a teleological universe, of which I can give but a few examples. A conception “which embraced all events in a foreordained world-plan would be no less determinist than the most rigid materialism.” Absolute predestination is not to be identified with the teleological conception. “The view that freedom is a part of the purpose towards which creation moves is in harmony with the facts of organic evolution.” Freedom is part of the cosmic purpose.

Is the teleological idea contradicted by the fact that God’s purpose appears to be deferred or even frustrated? After a partial answer, Dean Matthews concludes that: “How to account for the failures of the divine purpose, or at least their temporary frustration, is a standing problem of Theodicy.” “The End of the whole creation need not be one which, in all its details, is comprehensible to human intelligence.”

Matthews goes deeply into the question as to “whether any teleological direction can be seen in history.” He cannot accept the view that history is totally devoid of significance, but also rejects the idea “that all events are ordained as part of an all-inclusive teleological order.” Such a conception “would be as much opposed” to freedom as a purely materialistic view of history. “The historical process has included a long struggle with and eventual conquest of the material environment.” Concurrently has been “the conquest of self.” “Christian theology has not always grasped the significance of a truth which it has always held—the close relation between creation and redemption.” The third standpoint of cosmic purpose manifested in history is that of the social ideal.

We need to remember that the history of man is not

completed, that we know only a part and that very imperfectly. "Providence seems to work in the sphere of history by persuasion and not by compulsion." History seems erratic. "But, nevertheless, history has some meaning. It discloses a direction."

We feel the sense of the "majestic order of the universe," but it is not a closed system. It is continuously creative. Life and mind cannot be conceived of as the resultants of the non-living and non-mental. Man's rational thoughts cannot have a non-rational ancestry.

Dean Matthews closes with a refutation of the contention that the teleological view is in contradiction to the presupposition of the moral consciousness; discusses the perplexities of the eschatological theory of history and then returns to the idea of "the Kingdom of God as the goal of history and of the development of persons." He does not believe that "the coming of the Kingdom would be, in every sense, the end of time."

The view of totalitarianism as "the Church type of state," which "will endure for a long period," is especially interesting. In it he sees some values, such as "the virtue of treating man as a whole, and of seeing that there is no such thing as purely 'private' opinion." "We need not fear that the attraction of the Son of Man and of the fellowship with one another through Him will, in the long run, be outdone by the appeal of leaders of the proletariat or of national resurgence."

Our last topic deals with the question as to the light thrown by cosmic purpose on the divine nature itself. "The obvious conclusion" of Dean Matthews is "that God is a willing and purposive being." Disagreeing with traditional theology and with Archbishop Temple, he believes that "the doctrine of the self-sufficiency of God should be rejected." God is not "incapable of want or desire."

The purpose of God is the fulfilment of the Kingdom of God. While one aspect of God's design is "the achievement of full personal life and the harmonious and creative fellowship of persons with one another and with Himself," it is "in the conception of the Kingdom of God" that we have "a completely adequate idea for the explanation of the teleological movement of created things."

Dr. Matthews ends his long rationalization with a note of humility, quoting to himself the words which came to Job out of the whirlwind. For which I was glad, for while reason may lead us to God, we may be grateful that we are not dependent upon it for a faith to live by.

And if the reader recalls previous reviews⁴ of Barthians and Empiricists and Personalists, he will agree with President Richards that "one stands in awe of the erudition, the mental acumen, the mastery of the vast areas of matters and mind, the indefatigable quest for God and the complete life of men individually and socially."

4. SCIENCE: AND THE SCIENCE OF RELIGION

In his introduction to *THE RIDDLE OF THE WORLD* by Principal D. S. Cairns of Christ's College, Aberdeen, Dr. Robert E. Speer tells us that the author "understands and sympathizes with the modern mind." Principal Cairns writes, therefore, to those "who have abandoned the Christian revelation because they have found it . . . too difficult to believe." He recognizes the need of considering it afresh. Dealing first with this "Human Situation," the author believes that the Science of Religion has adequately demonstrated "the

⁴ In *Contemporary Christian Thought and Trends of Christian Thinking*.

nature and universality of religion." But we are confronted by a new interpretation of the world, through the scientific method. There are many who believe that the world of nature can be explained without God, and man has been by them merged in nature. A new naturalism has replaced the *older* materialism.

Frankly facing this philosophy, Dr. Cairns finds that nature has produced in man "a being higher than herself" whom she seems to be at once seeking both to nurture and destroy. All, he thinks, would agree that while nature may be exploited, it is wrong to exploit human beings. Reviewing writers who have dismissed theism because of the problem of evil, he believes that the explanation of science of this riddle of the world is "very like a *reductio ad absurdum*."

Principal Cairns does not discover any dominant philosophy in our Western world, but he finds "the reappearance of positivism under the more attractive name of humanism." The essential features of American humanism are the discrediting of theism and Christianity, on the ground that they have been destroyed by science; that nature is the foundation of everything; and that science "is our only pathway to reality." Humanism can hardly rank as a philosophy; its value in fact is rather that it is "a condition of mind" as widespread as Western civilization. The Humanists reject theism because the scientific view is inconsistent with it and because the presence of evil precludes an almighty God of Love.

The author is convinced that the claim of science to be the one pathway to reality can be readily disposed of. The scientific method has self-imposed limitations which prevent an adequate interpretation of nature and human life. It gives us "an obviously mutilated and distorted picture of the universe," and in the end will

"lead us into a suicidal scepticism about knowledge."

"Science is a net framed to catch certain kinds of fish and let other fish through.' " One of these escapes is individuality. You cannot write history in terms of pure science. One cannot write the final truth about great human leaders "in abstract terms." The endeavour to make science explain human action "leads to mere caricature."

After a lucid discussion of eighteenth century philosophies, Dr. Cairns challenges the humanist view of religious ideals as " 'wishful thinking,' " and the claim that science is impartial. He asks: "If it is lawful and right (for science) to postulate cosmic order as the basis of science, why should it be unlawful and wrong to postulate moral order in the universe as the basis of all moral action?" "Science needs religion for its basis too much to be permanently alienated from it."

Science can never be the final word in explaining even the world of nature; it cannot explain history. There are other pathways to reality than its own. Are our human judgments of good and bad, right and wrong, subjective and created by ourselves? If so, "how did the sense of the supreme value of human beings and the unconditional imperatives of morality grow up?" If we have here a pathway to reality "we must transform our earlier scientific view of a world of causes and effects into that of a Kingdom of Ends." There is a moral imperative. Is it not best explained as a voice that "comes from ultimate reality"? This, however, "does not, in principle, lead to any conflict with the use of the scientific pathway."

Proceeding to "natural theology," we are led into a larger conception of the physical universe than that of science. Only a spiritual interpretation can do justice to the element of individuality in animate nature, to

human personality, to moral values, yes even to "the mathematical order or the gratuitous beauty of the natural world." (On this subject the reviewer hopes our younger Barthians will dwell, and no longer lose out to the scientific naturalists who agree with them that God has not revealed Himself in His creation.)

The discussion of evil is not ended by simply discarding belief in God. When we turn from nature to the human soul, we come into "another zone of revelation." We have "a potentiality of direct awareness of the Divine," "the supernatural or numinous." We have such a revelation in good men. Dr. Cairns follows with a most clarifying description of the nature and content of the Bible, and the cumulative nature of its evidence as a revelation of God, reaching its climax in the Incarnation. The Biblical solution of the riddle of the world "is that God, in whom sovereignty and supreme wisdom and goodness and beauty unite, is through nature creating a Kingdom of free human spirits in His own image and likeness for everlasting communion with Himself."

VI

THE CASE FOR LIBERALISM

I. THE FUTURE OF LIBERALISM

The exponents of the “crisis” theology have already told us that “Liberalism” is dead, as the result of its sins, and perhaps it is time to hear from those who still are liberals, but assert that they live. In *LIBERALISM FACES THE FUTURE*, by Clarence R. Skinner, we have such a volume. The Dean of Tufts College, a liberal institution, however, does more; he assays both the limitations and promise of Liberalism and indicates how its claims may be vindicated.

Professor Skinner believes in “the fundamental importance of Liberalism as a contribution to our civilization.” He attempts to define it in economic, theological, political, educational and social terms, as they are used by liberals. The best way, however, to make clear what we mean is to describe its opposite—illiberalism. Illiberalism is “submission to authority because it is authority,” follows tradition, is intolerant, with a closed mind. “It claims rather than inquires.”

Liberalism opposes this attitude of mind, challenges authority to prove itself, encourages experimentation, looks forward to new light. “It yields to truth and not to its own conception of truth” and is adventurous. But it also has method; although it “is not a body of doctrine,” it may have a program. The true liberal is not just an “anti.” “The positive and constructive purpose of liberalism” is “the discovery of reality.”

To-day it faces “a rising tide of authoritarianism” and men are seeking peace such as that of the Roman

Church or, with the Barthians, "surrendering their critical faculties to God."

Modern liberalism was a reaction from something like this; the stiff and unyielding scholasticism of the Middle Ages, in which the Church built up "an authority which became an end in itself." The State also claimed to be derived from God. Illiberalism became "the rationalized philosophy" of the "privileged classes." Business and trade likewise. Modern liberalism made its way through three events, Renaissance, Reformation, and Revolution.

Liberalism found definite channels; individualism, toleration, scientific enquiry, religious sectarianism, political democracy and parliamentarianism, and economic capitalism. It developed personality. This induced toleration. It was the new scientific temper that gave the body blow to medievalism. Authoritarianism was necessary to uniformity and its defeat could not do other than induce sectarianism. Liberalism "wrenched power out of the hands of self-appointed dictators." Free competition started capitalism on its modern career.

This liberalism never formulated itself as a concrete system, but it had definite articles of faith. It had belief in man; his desire and ability "to choose the right rather than evil," to solve social problems. The liberal emphasized the principle of integration of man with the world and other men. Freedom itself required this. The liberal had "confidence"—but not that of mere optimism. He did not believe that the highest values are mere illusions.

But Liberalism had weaknesses. Or rather, liberals had. They were too negative and did not seek constructive measures. They had no program or propulsive dynamic. There was a sentimental "unrealistic over-emphasis on the innate worth and dignity of per-

sonality." Human sin was not sufficiently evaluated. Science in its moral values was overrated. Individualism was over-stressed in the view of the values of personality. Finally, the liberal relied too exclusively on education and development of character. He became too patient with wrongdoing and did not recognize "the place of upheavals and crises in his philosophy of personal life."

Looking now to the future, the liberal faces a new renaissance—of authoritarianism. "The vastness and intricacy of civilization" give rise to a sense of impotence. Our "cultural pluralism" has two effects: it adds richness to life, but tension to society. The authoritarian loses sight of the former in the supposed menace of the latter. Complexity seems to call for centralized power. Our war psychology is dominant; you cannot manage an army democratically. Hence dictatorships.

Can Liberalism survive these hostile forces? To do so it must also change and have a new birth. Its socialists must be ahead of Marx, its Republicans ahead of Lincoln, its religious liberals ahead of Parker.

Liberalism must continue to seek liberty. Its terms must be large; "no one is free until all are free." It must itself be a totalitarian movement, through unity in our diversity. It has a multitude of liberties to seek; "Freedom in a liberal society consists in the two-way movement of personality reacting on institutions, and institutions reacting on persons, both moving together toward the creation of guarantees and opportunities for a larger life."

There must be method. The state must be saved from illiberal dogmatism by freedom of criticism. Government must be used as an instrument of social action. Liberalism will seek peace and check the modern turn

towards violence; "new horizons for Liberalism will make violence unnecessary." The liberal must not rest in "wishful thinking" but encourage "social planning." There must be a willingness to curtail individual liberty.

Finally, there must be faith with freedom; reliance on "spiritual power." Not blind faith, however consecrated and emotional it need be. There is a unity of "truth-seeing with the spiritual power of faith." "What happens in the next hundred years will depend largely upon the extent to which liberals keep or lose their nerve."

I find myself disposed to venture a homily as I read this volume. What has disturbed me most in these latter days has been the tendency of certain leaders who seek to emancipate us, to take on the very intolerance and totalitarian aggression from which we need most to be delivered and to build their positives upon wholesale iconoclasm. Because science has been misused, they abuse scientists, without discrimination between those who have perverted it and those who have sought to use it for the freedom and well-being of mankind. They have overlooked the fact that there are liberals and conservatives. At the moment when we need deliverance from secular authoritarianism, they offer us imperious dogmas with the same intolerant tone as does a Hitler in his speeches. I wonder if the real need of the day is not a new Liberalism to free us from the autocracy of some modern theologians as well as from that of the political uppermosts of the immediate moment, a Liberalism such as Dr. Skinner has outlined, a Liberalism of spiritual faith. For myself, I look toward such a movement for our redemption, rather than to the theological iconoclasts of the immediate moment.

2. A FAITH FOR LIBERAL CHRISTIANITY

In view of the confusion of thought at the home base, what must be the problem of carrying the Christian faith to enquiring minds in the Foreign Mission field! Hugh Vernon White, in *A WORKING FAITH FOR THE WORLD*, seeks to justify "liberal Christianity" as "the true Christian faith," both for the Foreign Missions body of which he is an administrator and for the rest of the world as well.

Dr. White finds men to-day forced to answer the questions: "What is the true nature of man? What is the true bond of social solidarity? Can man govern himself or must he have a master?"

Revolutions in both thought and life "have revealed intrinsic limitations" in the historic forms of both Roman Catholicism and Protestantism which have become "increasingly irrelevant and obstructive to the original purpose of Christianity." "In method Liberalism has been right; its language has been that of the real world. Now it needs a return to God . . . to leave the reformer's egotism and truculence or sentimentality for the prophet's passion." In other words, instead of joining the Barthian chorus in damning and repudiating liberal Christianity, Dr. White, like Dr. Skinner, would preserve it by setting it right.

Dr. White finds mankind, even when ranged behind the banners of Fascist and Communist ideologies, "in a desperate quest" for truth and for a cause to which they can give themselves, body and soul. Despite all the madness of the world, "man is on a spiritual pilgrimage" and he would find his goal in Christianity if he only knew what it really is. That is the meaning of the one-party political system, and "the national obsessions that are being fostered to-day have much more

the quality of religion than of science or philosophy."

The Church has allowed the "simple humanism" of the Gospels to be blighted by the "radical other-worldliness of the Church." Meanwhile the Western world has secularized its life. In Germany the Church suffers, not because it has demanded "the embodiment of Christian ideals," but because it resists the State "with its claims of ecclesiastical autonomy based upon its own doctrine of divine revelation." "The cause of the conflict is theological and not ethical."

In general, Dr. White charges the Church, both Catholic and Protestant, with having exercised the very "discipline and authority," and with the very suppression of "freedom for the human spirit," of which we now bitterly complain. He believes that the contemporary national ideologies will pass away. Christianity will have its opportunity, but it must be a Christianity freed from Roman Catholic dogmatic metaphysics, from Lutheran other-worldliness, and from the legalistic conception of Calvinism. It must translate God's will into terms of personal and social morality and its faith will be "firmly grounded on a metaphysic of Christian theism" and "an ethic of Christian love."

The author prophesies that the revival of theism among Protestant liberals will produce a positive faith equal to the liberal Christian ethic. After paying tribute to the Christianity of the past, Dr. White concludes that it has lost the very things in human life which it has built up: "science, education and even humanitarianism are being cut loose from their Christian origins." They have come under the domination of Nationalism.

"The Christian faith which will undergird the life of men and nations and furnish a spiritual bond of unity for the world must have a metaphysic in which

men really believe." The doctrine of man "must be grounded in a doctrine of God," to provide an ethical and humanitarian Christianity. Thus only can it face the threat to freedom of thought, coming now from secular sources. To meet the demand of the world to-day Christianity "must establish in theology the truth of its doctrine of God upon which all else depends." "And it must work constantly for the removal of obstacles to intellectual liberty and barriers to the essential democracy which free religion requires."

In the author's discussion of "the different kinds of religion" he finds that "both science and philosophy contribute to the purifying and advancement of religion." The types of religion are primitive, ethnic, national and universal. He sees the need of leading men out of primitive religion, and delivering them from the prejudices of ethnic and national religions. "No form of Christianity can ever be a true national religion." "The basis of primitive religion is instinct, that of ethnic faith is biology, and that of national religion is politics." The universal religions are Islam, Buddhism and Christianity "because they claim to be true."

Dr. White gives us a lucid study on "the role of religion in human life" as it is found in the world's great religions. "One of the most vital points" of any religion "is the consequence of its main metaphysical doctrines in human conduct and in social organization." Broadly speaking, "in Hinduism, and even more in Islam, life in its essential aspects is absorbed into the structure of religion. In Buddhism religion renounces life and offers a salvation of escape from it."

"The principle of Christianity is that of an ethical religion or of a religious morality." It has a permanent motivation for life and "furnishes essential conceptions and ideals for the regeneration of the

individual and society." At times and to some degree, however, the elements of the other religions are found in Christianity, at least as practiced. "More is required of Christian men and of the Christian Church" than in any other religion, and the author closes with these words: "There is no doubt that Christianity is the one faith that can unify and redeem life, but it does not work officially or automatically; it works through the lives and through the fellowship of those who believe in it with all their hearts."

He concludes in his study of the effect of religion on civilization that "liberal Christianity" is our hope. Its heart—"its substance is . . . that simple and persuasive teaching of Jesus which He expressed both in kindly deeds and in His heroic death, manifestations alike of the divine love that does good and suffers vicariously for sin; and in His effectual personal presence after the defeat of death." Its method is "intellectual freedom from arbitrary and dogmatic control and an essentially democratic process." In too large measure Protestant Christianity, by its doctrinal and ecclesiastical religion, has made "a dubious contribution to the common life." This has been offset, however, by its deepening humanitarianism. The natural effects of Christianity on civilization are: an ethical impulse, personal and social; stimulus to education; and the sense of social responsibility.

"There is, however, a difference between secular social idealism" and Christian impulse. "The former depends on the will of man, and the latter on the will of God." Christianity in the foreign field, if it had only charity for the poor, with "no strong, clear word of faith and hope," would be "but a poor and futile thing." "The fundamental reason for the Christian world mission lies in the fact that Christianity has the

clearest revelation of God's will and nature." Under this impulse the missionary shares his life with those he seeks to win. "'Sharing,'" "as qualified by the intolerance of truth and the irresponsibility of faith," is his mission.

Christianity, Dr. White goes on to elucidate, is a "movement" and not merely an organization or a propaganda. The Church and the "world" are inter-mixed and Christians are often that very "world" which the ideal church opposes for its selfishness. And the world is not all bad. Men of the same stuff as Christians are outside Christian institutions. Three institutions—the hospital, the school, and the Church—"have been the main channels of Christian effort and they still are." Unhappily "in efficiency of organizations, in professional standards of the leaders, and in the matter of equipment the Church is inferior to the hospital and the school." Yet say what we may, the Church is still the most important agency for the progress of Christianity. Education and medicine are becoming secularized.

But Christianity is never confined to the Church, and in some ways the most impressive form of the Christian "movement" in the Orient is in the influence upon life in general of the teachings and ideals of Christianity. Thus we have "two poles of the Christian movement" and they suggest two types of missionary work. There must be Christian service "which has no direct connection with converting people" or building up the Church. But those who give that service must have Christian faith and live as Christian believers.

What are the objectives of Christianity? They are the finding and impartation of Christian truth and the development of Christian personality and Christian community. "Every minister of religion should be

. . . a competent theologian." "There is a difference between scientific truth and religious truth." Science is "morally neutral." There is a difference between "philosophical truth" and "religious truth." Philosophy is "impersonal, impartial, dispassionate thought." Religion embraces "love and hope, devotion, self-commitment, whole-hearted action." Thus Christianity seeks "Christian truth," worship, moral endeavour, faith. Jesus "was not merely representing God or telling the truth about Him; He was revealing Him." Religious truth is an equivalent for "Reality." The historic revelation of God in Jesus Christ "initiated a new era in which every man is enabled to have his own direct experience of God," through the Holy Spirit.

We have developed systems of doctrine, and imposed artificial restraint and yet "there still remain certain large-scale affirmations of truth" that are almost universally held by the Christian Church. Liberal Christianity lives in a realm of freedom and progress and sees "no finality" in the quest for truth. "In all the penitence of penitent liberals to-day let us be sure that we do not surrender or renounce" the essence of Liberalism. And liberal Christianity must also study non-Christian faiths in this spirit. It must oppose "all arbitrary denial of rational criticism of religious doctrines."

In the Christian development of personality there are both the intellectual and the moral bases for our study, but "the meaning of personality finds its truest embodiment in Jesus" and "its most explicit application in His teachings." The logic of the "natural social morality of the class and the clan and the nation" is so forcefully asserted to-day that we need the Christian doctrine of "universalism based on Christian individuality." "The true character of personality is not seen until it is

clearly recognized that group characteristics of any kind are secondary, not essential." It is because "God loves man" that man "acquires and has sacredness and value," and the full meaning of personality as Christianity conceives it "cannot be understood apart from the quality of the divine Personality." Moral relationship is "between persons, either between human persons or between man and God." Persons are more important than abstract moral laws and "the true moral relation is one of free persons who love one another."

There is no break in Christianity between religion and ethics, at least as to "basic motivation." God is a Person and "the basic relation of man with God and of man with man is personal." Thus Christianity is both theistic and ethical. Contemporary Christianity needs to enter into the struggle for personality "with a clear conviction of what it is doing."

The author's foregoing theses lead him straight into the "Christian Community." Personality is essentially social and it is a "false antithesis" to set "'personal'" over against "'social'" righteousness and salvation. This unity in the "social-individual" conception of personality underlies Christianity. The only "direct, courageous, and fully developed expression" of true community is in the teachings of Jesus. But while the social ideal of the Kingdom of Heaven was Jesus' great objective, His approach to its realization was "through a change in the individual." The making of "patterns" and "programs" is the task for the intelligence and good will of Christian men. There is, however, a "purpose," and there are "principles" which can claim the absoluteness of the divine. The Church has not always realized the distinction between patterns and principles and has set up forms of conduct on the authority of God. Likewise individuals claim "'guidance'" for the

details of daily conduct in trivial things. Both ways are based on "a misconception of the place of God's will" and, therefore, of "the absolute in personal and social morality."

What God has set before us are the great "objectives" of Christian faith. But Christianity is "not utopian." Selfishness is not conquered by changes of economic systems. Christianity has a stake in three basic conditions: "*intellectual liberty, democracy, and government by law.*" The Catholic Church holds itself to be the authority; Protestantism has tried to make God's will effective by enacting laws. Liberal Christianity has an alternative: "it lays upon the heart of the individual Christian the task of using the processes of social and political life in the interests of a Christian society."

In this volume we have a good primer for perplexed Christians. Dr. White does not appear to be disturbed over the search for any new "existential," "crisis" or "eschatological" theology. He believes that the liberal tradition may be safely, if sanely, followed. Our basic faith "must be rooted more deeply in history and in God," by "sober-minded men" "who see realistically" the evils of our time, but who believe they have "the way of hope and ultimate victory."

The reader will wish to compare this study with that of Dr. Kraemer, as another evidence of the differing trends of Continental and American thinking.

VII

HUMANISM: OUTLIVED OR REVISED AND REFORMED?

I. BEYOND HUMANISM: A PHILOSOPHY OF NATURE

Professor Henry Nelson Wieman, of the University of Chicago, has assured us that "if we are moving toward a time when free inquiry and criticism shall be released, and the mind of man stimulated to search out all things by his natural power, there will ensue the growth of a naturalistic religion which is conscious and professed," "to sustain, guide and inspire human life toward the most worthwhile reality."¹

A volume from the same university deals with "the new philosophy of nature," entitled BEYOND HUMANISM, by Professor Charles Hartshorne.

Professor Hartshorne believes that we have light in our darkened political world in the "new promise" of the "intellectual future." He finds "a radically new conception of God" "incomparably better able to meet the powerful criticisms which modern thought has hitherto directed against theology." "There is a philosophical movement which is not idealism or monism or materialism or sheer pluralism, or positivism or supernaturalism or atheism," "but a genuine integration of all the modern motifs, in the sense in which Thomism was an integration of medieval ones." Likewise, the new state of science is preferable to the old. If men do not have this hope, it is because they have not gotten

¹ *American Philosophies of Religion*, Henry N. Wieman and Bernard E. Meland, Willett, Clark & Co., 1936. Wieman's philosophy is characterized in *Trends of Christian Thinking*.

acquainted with the new trends, or are blindly halting them.

Through over-specialized training, physicists are unfamiliar with philosophy or theology, and philosophers are unacquainted with physics or theology. The author thinks that "theologians perhaps make the bravest efforts of the three to 'keep up.'" Professor Hartshorne regards Peirce and Whitehead as having the most combined appreciation of religion, philosophy and science and as being, with James and Bergson, the chief founders of the new philosophy. For the new theology Whitehead and Tennant are the best sources.

In the volume under review, the author sets forth the new philosophy and theology with special reference to its rival, Humanism, meaning by the latter term current forms of non-theistic philosophy, whether pragmatic or positivistic. This new philosophical position may be described as "theistic naturalism" or "naturalistic theism," which will be subject to attack on two sides; by those who reject any theism and those who scorn any naturalism.

The first section of the book deals with the new philosophy as contrasted with Humanism, which is a "specious over-simplification, dealing with but one part of nature instead of nature as a whole."

Pure Humanism is self-destructive, "for interest in man implies interest in those things in which man is interested." The discussion of divine transcendence and immanence calls for new study, which is not greatly helped either by Barthians or atheist Marxians. They are stimuli, "but sanity and profitable discussion depend upon neither group becoming too numerous."

"The heart of Christendom has been with Jesus—*deus est caritas*—but its intellect has been with Spinoza *deus sive natura*," but we no longer have to make choice

between the two, in the light of the new science and new logic.

On revelation and fundamentalism our author agrees measurably with the Humanists; "an infallible dogma or book or Church is a boast or a bludgeon, not a call to comradeship in human strength or human modesty and repentance."

The great phrase of Spinoza, "God or Nature," has meaning to all except the pure supernaturalist and the pure pragmatic humanist.

Humanism is a disintegrating force. If the goal of religion is the integration of personality ("salvation") then Humanism is an inadequate religion. Its failure to distinguish between the finite and the ultimate is really its essence. Plato would have smiled at its childish notion that the only thing to do about the distant doom of humanity would be to be brave about it.

"A unified person is a synthesis of knowledge and love," a synthesis which is inhibited by Humanism. The humanist can love the human, he can only know nature. "Humanism condemns us to a lack of integration within knowledge itself." "For just as God is nature as infinitely lovable, so He is nature as infinitely intelligible. To say nature is godless is to say that it is not basically intelligible." "Apart from the relation of love to knowledge, Humanism is unable to integrate love itself" and consequently cannot solve the ethical and social problem.

If the question is asked: "What, if anything, does theistic morality add to humanistic?" Reinhold Niebuhr answers: "Depth." "The ethical weakness of Humanism is seen in both personal and group relations." The relation of mind to body "loses its religious, its high ethical character." One of the most fearful signs of this humanistic disintegration is the

revival of cruelty, really encouraged by such thinkers as Nietzsche, Spengler, the Marxians and the earlier, atheistic Wagner. Professor Hartshorne relates the loose views on sex of H. G. Wells (since he changed from theist to humanist), and other humanists to their mind-body theory.

The author asks the final question: "Where is the mighty mediator by which the requisite division of powers is to be given the religious appeal"—as between human individual and groups, in economic relations? "It cannot be mankind." Without it "there can be no clear criterion of good and bad, fortunate or unfortunate." Finally, "the whole of nature as carrying in itself all truth about the past and present and all purposes for things to come as parts of a single life whose integrating principle is sensitiveness seeking harmony, and which is progressively revealed to man by rationally clarified religious inspiration, whose two great expressions to-day are ethical and scientific ideas—this is the superhuman being with reference to which all human power and valuation can be seen in perspective. Old Supernaturalism possessed only a distorted and meager vision of this being; new Humanism is not necessarily blinder or as blind. But the question is, can we not do better than either?"

The author's analyses of the philosophies of Dewey and other humanists, of Russia and Marxian Humanism, Freud, and of historic forms of Humanism are searching, informing and (though not always) lucid.

Part II is on our understanding of nature. The author stands for indeterminism and freedom in opposition to any deterministic conception. This metaphysical section is treated with an erudition that was considerably beyond me and I will pass on to the conclusion, "The Historic Role of Humanism."

It is a mode of thinking incident to a stage of scientific thought. Scholastic theology extinguished Plato and Aristotle and laid foundations for the modern view of the world as "a vast lifeless machine, quite distinct from its mechanic-Creator" and "alien to man." The final step was pure Humanism. "The isolation of matter from mind and purpose is due to medieval religion as much as to modern science." God was divided from His world, this world separated from the next, eternity from time, the soul from the body, the spiritual from the sensuous and material. "Humanism is the final version of this exaggerated dualism or otherworldliness."

The twentieth century will recover the "original 'natural piety.'" "The ultimate ideal of knowledge and of action remains this—to deal with the world as the body of a God of love." Humanism will contest this: "Science has perhaps a long way to travel before the outlines of a companionable nature can be made definite enough."

Nevertheless, "there is but one good, with many aspects—*deus est caritas*—and there is some spark, however dim, of that good in all things, and in all relationships of all things." Is not such a new philosophy worth a trial? the author asks.

The question is still left, however, to what idea of God are we led? I find occasional hints. God is "the sympathetic unity of the world on the side of whatever makes for such unity." He is the "all-sensitive mind of the world-body." The world is "the body of God." To a theism which holds God and nature, the spiritual and the material, in some kind of unity, I find myself responding. But I wonder whether Professor Hartshorne will end with Wieman's God as "process," or with God as personal, even though not a person? We

may perhaps defer our judgment on this philosophy of nature until we have Professor Hartshorne's next book, *The Vision of God*, which, for one, I await with deep interest.

2. HUMANISM TRANSCENDENT

We may well follow Hartshorne's philosophy with another, which is almost its antipodes, in both the evaluation of Humanism and in its correctives. Jacques Maritain, a French lay Catholic, in his TRUE HUMANISM, goes at the issue in a treatment which is both historical and philosophical. As a philosopher he deals with Humanism in the area of "practical" philosophy as defined by Aristotle and St. Thomas Aquinas, including "the whole philosophy of human action," in contrast to speculative philosophy;—as "a science of freedom." M. Maritain draws his "inspiration and principles" from St. Thomas. He begins with a discussion of "Heroism and Humanism." "There is nothing man desires more than a heroic life," albeit "there is nothing less common to men than heroism."

Humanism is inseparable from civilization, and it "is possible to have a Humanism fed from the heroic springs of sanctity." Authentic Humanism is not anti-religious. That is the author's thesis. True, contemporary liberal-bourgeois Humanism is a "materialized spirituality" which has been taken possession of by "the active materialism of atheism and paganism." Maritain proposes to define a new "*Integral Humanism*" which is Christian and which is not "the imperialism" of race, class or nation, but that asks men to sacrifice, a heroic Humanism which "can make man grow in communion" as it permeates the whole social order.

The problem of man is to determine "the *practical and concrete* position of the human creature before God

and his destiny." In a lucid discussion of the Humanism of medieval Christendom, M. Maritain says that "the flaw in Classical Humanism is not that it is humanist, but that it is anthropocentric." "As the pessimism of the Reformers unduly exaggerated the Christian concept of original sin, so the optimism of the Renaissance unduly exalted . . . the value of the human being." The effect of this culture was "towards a rehabilitation of the creature turned back upon itself and cut off . . . from the transcendent principle of its life."

We are thus led to distinguish between a Humanism which is "theocentric or truly Christian" and one which is anthropocentric. The author hopefully believes that the Humanism which separated and put in opposition "faith and reason," "nature and grace," "love and knowledge" and "the affective life of love and the senses," is now in final decomposition.

From the point of view of culture, the period of the sixteenth-seventeenth centuries was the time of "Christian naturalism." In the eighteenth-nineteenth we had "rationalist optimism." The period of the twentieth century "is that of the materialist reversal of all values, the *revolutionary* movement, where man, definitely setting his last end in himself and unable longer to endure the machine of the world, engages in a desperate effort out of a radical atheism to bring a wholly new humanity." "God dies, for man so materialized holds that he can only be in fact man or superman, if God is not God," and whatever other gains man may make, his "human life thus becomes increasingly inhuman." If this continues, the world, as Aristotle put it, "will become habitable only by beasts or by gods." How could God live in a world from which His image, the free and spiritual personality of man, has gone? "*The most*

representative expression of this . . . stage of the dialectic of anthropocentric Humanism is to be seen in contemporary Russian atheism. (Italics by the reviewer.) We are face to face to-day with two absolute positions: "pure atheism and pure Christianity."

Communism is a religion, claiming to reveal to man the meaning of his existence. Faith in the Communist revolution presupposes a whole universe of faith and religious values, on which it rests. There are original elements in Communism which are also Christian, but these "energies of Christian origin" have been turned to do service to an atheist ideology. And we must admit that the modern Christian world, in social, political and economic life, abandoned these issues and deprived them of "the light of Christ." Economic conditions have a profound bearing on spiritual destinies. This neglect has made possible the substitution of material causality as the way of salvation "and the realization, so to say, of the Kingdom of God." The Messiah is the proletariat. The rejection of God is the rejection of the human person as a spiritual being. The social implications of Communism are conclusions drawn from an atheistic Humanism. A socialist Humanism simply follows in the steps of bourgeois Humanism.

Looking at atheism philosophically, we learn from any authentic philosophical conception of the human will, that atheism "cannot be lived" in its metaphysical depth. "*If it could be lived down to its ultimate roots in the will,*" it would disorganize and kill the will metaphysically.

Nevertheless, we have this religious atheism before us as a fact. The Marxist theoreticians, however, seem to demand that "something resembling liberty and a soul be attributed to matter." They are faced with the problem of "living out the *ethical translation* of athe-

ism, i.e., the refusal of God as the final end and rule of human life." Maritain believes—or hopes—that Russian Communism may yet be forced, in order to keep in existence the régime and the social results already achieved, to renounce its original spiritual error. As Lenin once remarked that sexual dissoluteness was a phenomenon of bourgeois decadence, so, perhaps, a successor may some day proclaim that atheism is a product of that same decadence. And if Russian Communism comes to a recognition of fundamental problems, the "scale of values founded on atheism" will be eliminated and "a system of personal values" be restored, accompanied "not by a return to the old order, but by a progressive renewal of the morals and the structure of civilization."

In our consideration of the Russian revolution we must not overlook the fact that the Orthodox Church never gave nature and reason their rightful places. An extreme *supernaturalism*, and a *paganism* which invaded Christian tradition, invited catastrophe. As the result of a revolution there may be a purification and "the dawn of a possibility for the Russian people of a full awareness of the proper values of nature and reason," and thus authentic cultural values may be re-established. There are even Russian Christians who hope that Russia may be ahead of other nations in "the shaping of a new Christendom."

M. Maritain names two Christian positions in the facing of materialistic Humanism. The Barthian returns to primitive Calvinism and is anti-humanist; demanding "the annihilation of man before God." It is "the pure pessimism of primitive Protestantism." When Barth speaks "in order to proclaim that man must listen only to God, it is *he himself* that speaks, *he him-*

self that is heard and it is *his personality* that moves and stirs his listeners." (Italics by the reviewer.)

The other Christian position, " 'Integralist'" and " 'progressive,'" is that of Catholicism as interpreted by St. Thomas. The duty of Christians is to save the " 'humanist'" truths that have been disfigured by anthropocentric Humanism. The new age of Christian culture must witness neither the belittling nor annihilation of the creature; his rehabilitation will not be without God but "*in God*." In socialist Humanism there is "a great urge towards truths" which cannot be neglected. Nineteenth century Socialism was a protest of the human conscience. Deceptive as it was, we are in its debt. There was human love in it. "But the force of love is a wild and dangerous one; and when it comes, in the object of its love, to doors which are barred against it . . . it turns into a thing of terror, to a murderous hatred." Nevertheless, there is a place in Christian Humanism for both Luther and Voltaire, but not for their errors. An "integral Humanism" condemns the bourgeois type of humanity. It is vain to assert the dignity and vocation of human personality "if we do not strive to transform the conditions that oppress these."

The Kingdom of God is realized by the agency of both temporal and spiritual orders. It has three forms of thought. There is the city, at once earthly and heavenly, where God is king. The Church is the chrysalis of the Kingdom. The World is the secular city, whose end is temporal life.

The problem that faces the Church is that of what we call the "World." We must, first of all, dismiss the "*satanocratic*" conception of it. On the other hand, the "*theophanic*" or "*theocratic*" idea is untenable. We cannot look at the "World" as simply the earthly do-

main of man and nature, isolating it from any sacred or supernatural significance. But this does not mean that the Christian, in his temporal activity, is to make "this world in itself" the Kingdom of God.

What, then, is the temporal mission of the Christian? He must take account of world evil in our social system which has "progressively worsened to the point of becoming intolerable"; its failure being due, among other causes, to the "*dualism*" of the modern age. For the Christian this dualism is at an end. "*Social consciousness*" has come into Christian thought and life. Christianity calls for "a social, political and economic philosophy" to be made concrete. The principles of such have been laid down in the encyclicals of Leo XIII and Pius XI. "It is time for Christian sanctity . . . to put its hand to the things of earth, *but with the consciousness that its strength and majesty are from elsewhere and of another order.*" (Italics by the reviewer.) It will be a new kind of sanctity. The secular is no longer opposed to the sacred "as the impure to the pure," but we shall think in terms of two different orders, one for temporal, the other for spiritual ends. The Christian seeks, first, to look forward to the full manifestation of the Kingdom of God, and in the meantime seeks realization of the claims of the Gospel and of practical Christian wisdom in the socio-temporal order.

What then, is "the concrete *historical ideal*" of this new Christendom? It is the end which is fixed, not only by social evolution, but also by the Christian's own choice and his own love; an end which is not only included in the real but also in his own creative freedom. The author seeks a temporal system and age whose "*animating form*" will be Christian. He believes in the possibility of the realization of "all vitally Christian

civilization" in terms of "a new concrete *analogue*." The medieval ideal has been dissolved in a world of anthropocentric Humanism. Only the charm exhaled in the eighteenth century is left. "With the triumph of rationalism and liberalism, i. e., of a philosophy of freedom which makes of each abstract individual and his opinions the source of all right and truth, spiritual unity had 'gone west.'" One result is "anti-liberal reactions," taking form in a new absolutism, materialistic and inimical to Christianity. We are thus back to the old combat of the Christian faith against the despotism of world powers. The Church cannot renew Christendom by the ideal of another "Holy Empire."

Maritain's new Christendom "will imply a *secular Christian*, not a consecrational conception of the temporal order." It will be opposed to both the passing liberalism and "the inhuman Humanism of the anthropocentric age." In opposition to totalitarian conceptions of the State, it will seek "a *pluralist commonweal*," with positive liberties in a unity of diverse social groupings. This pluralism will take form in the realm of economics. M. Maritain looks for a replacement of the capitalist system by one which would be "in conformity with the communal and personalist conception of society."

The new Christendom will find its most significant application in "the sphere of relations between the temporal and spiritual orders," through the establishment of its pluralist principle. "The commonwealth would be vitally Christian" but the "non-Christian spiritual groups" would enjoy "a just liberty." The spiritual unity would not be imposed by unity of faith and dogma. The temporal order would be autonomous, although the spiritual would have primacy. The idea of

force has been displaced by that of the realization of freedom.

In place of capitalism we should have "an associative" proprietorship, in which the crucial problem is how to make the machine subordinate to man. The bourgeois family would be displaced by a genuine Christian ideal. Only by this new Christendom can democracy be purified and survive. It will be neither the medieval idea of God's world empire, nor the myth of class, race or nation. In it believers and unbelievers will engage in a common task which will be "*secularly Christian*."

The author has sought to submit his ideal to St. Thomas Aquinas and finds encouragement in doing so.

The conditions required for realization are a renunciation of the economist conception of social development and the moralization of politics. Christians must be more than pious. Iniquity must be regarded as a "political blunder" in the light of "a supreme political government of the universe." Those who would find this ideal unrealistic Maritain seeks to convict of "pseudo-realism." There is to-day a "positivism of the Right" which denies man's divine relationship and an "idealism of the Left" which seeks to divinize man. "Fascism springs from the one, Communism from the other." Both the élite and the masses must come to see this. "It is the tragedy of our time" that such a spiritual gain as the recognition of the dignity of work and the worker should "appear as though essentially part of an atheistic system such as Marxism." The proletariat "is the bearer of unused moral reserves which endow it with a mission" far higher than it sees. What Marx would do by class warfare, the Christian is called to do by spiritual conflict. As for the working classes, theirs is the historic mission of transforming the "irra-

tional" capitalist system, as they furnish the sociological basis. But they cannot do it by plutocratizing the proletariat.

The dilemma is inevitable; either the masses will be more and more attached to "the materialism and the metaphysical errors" which are parasites on them and be deceived, or "the principles whose deposit Christianity maintains" will shape their philosophy of the world and of life by "the formation of a theocentric Humanism."

On the one hand, there must be religious renewal among the masses, and on the other, Christians must be freed from sociological prejudices. There must be "a general redistribution of historic forces." As for the philosopher, he must look for light to "a higher science, given by faith and theology." The age calls for "a Christian philosophy of history," to understand "the accumulated fatalities of the capitalist economic order" and "the age-long development of anti-Christian forces." The "integral Humanism" we seek is the "Humanism of the Incarnation" "which carries the sign of no theocracy other than the gentle dominion of God's love."

The author looks for no early millenium, but for "momentary realizations" of his new Christian order. The prejudices and blindnesses of race and class among Christians are what holds the world back. But the Christian will need to use "human means." There may be need even of accepting the Marxist theory of force and M. Maritain believes that the Christian may use a "just force," when it is absolutely necessary. Above all, the Christian must begin with himself. It may be that this new Christendom will come only after "an epoch of terror and offended love." The Christian must have two objectives: the immediate and the remote or

ultimate. He may be tempted to limit his effort to the temporal defense of religious interests and liberties. This is necessary, but the Christian must not make this effort as a compromise.

Political action must have more than partial objectives, and the Christian must meet issues by more than methods of parley. His long-range objective will call for heroic treatment. In his analysis of "Catholic Action," Maritain conceives its mission to be the creation of "an essentially Christian state of mind." It is only when "'politics touches the altar'" that it is to intervene on the political plane. But the author looks for something more and different; for "the birth of new temporally and politically specified political formations, whose inspiration will be intrinsically Christian."

Most striking is Maritain's solution for the problem facing such groups as find themselves between the millstones of Fascism and Communism, as well as facing the evils of capitalism. He sees the possibility of such a minority formation being strong enough to "act on Communism itself and inclining it not only to extend a godless hand towards Christians, but to deliver itself from the atheism which is the root of its other errors." (One recalls, however, Earl Browder's recent approach to the Roman Catholic Church and its rejection.) But even if such a Christian group is legally annihilated by either dictatorial or Communist régime, it may still live and await its day.

While Fascist régimes have, despite irrational ways, invoked political and social truths, they can never furnish "a truly human and liberating direction." Fascism may turn European states to Communism. In any event, if religious forces do not hold in check "the forms of totalitarianism which claim to *protect* God" (the author probably has Italy in mind), "the real 'im-

piety' of this totalitarianism" will prepare the way for open anti-Christianity and atheism.²

The author will not admit that the Christian is "shut up in a tragedy from which there is no issue." "The purifications which," in history, "would have saved everything have come after all has gone to ruin, and begun to bloom again."

In an appendix, M. Maritain elucidates the several ways in which a Catholic may help towards remaking the world. On the first plane, which is spiritual in the most typical sense, "we act as members of the Mystical Body of Christ." On the second plane we are citizens of an earthly city. But while these planes are not separate, the temporal is subordinate to the spiritual. On the first the Christian acts "*as a Christian*." On the second he does "*not act as a Christian as such*."

But there is a third plane of action, intermediate between the other two, when the Catholic may "intervene in political affairs in the defense of religious interests." "*To speak as a Catholic*" in temporal affairs and "*to speak in the name of Catholicism*" are quite different matters.

One wonders whether there has been, since Augustine's "*City of God*," a more courageous volume than this. While not easy reading, it will reward any pastor who wants to go deeper into social philosophy than the patching up of the rents of our contemporary world. Readers will not find this an altogether comforting book, unless they have the author's long-range objective.

² One wonders what the reaction of such an idealist may be to Mussolini's proclamations on Church and State, such as the following: "The Latin and Imperial tradition of Rome to-day is represented by Catholicism." "The only universal idea which exists at Rome is that which radiates from the Vatican,"—but "within the State the Church is not sovereign and cannot even be regarded as free." Free translation from *Scritti e discorsi di Benito Mussolini, Milano, 1934.*

"The same men who have assisted the saints to sanctify themselves by a slow torment draw a profit from their merits and feed on the glory of these crucified souls—once they have been canonized—the plati-tudes of their eloquence and the prosperity of their enterprises; and they do not fail to prepare new agonies and new canonizations for saints." "Such is the growth of human history," "stretching out to its double consummation—in that absolute from below where man is a god without God, and the absolute on high where he is God in God." "And if *our* Christian civilization perish as do other ones"—"new births will come to be." And like a true philosopher, Maritain thinks in terms of eternity and is not over-worried about time.

VIII

MYSTICISM PURSUES ITS QUIET WAY

It is a serious error for the seeker after faith to become so involved in the dialectics of our day as to overlook the prevalence and significance of Mysticism. Many writers, even some of those reviewed in this volume, often seem at their highest and best when they lapse from intellectualism and become mystics, especially when they reach an impasse in their own logical pursuit of truth. To put it otherwise, they pause and rest in faith, in their quest for a Faith.

I. WHAT IS MYSTICISM?

One wonders what the readers' answers would be if they were asked to define "mysticism." In all probability there would be contradictory responses and not a few would reply that the subject was beyond them. Some would say that it is the height and depth of Christian experience, while others would consider it as a psychopathic phenomenon of the self-deluded.

In the volume, *THE PHILOSOPHIC BASIS OF MYSTICISM*, by Principal Thomas Hywel Hughes of the Scottish Congregational College, Edinburgh, we have an effort to sift all the claims, resulting in commendatory but discriminating conclusions, avoiding extremes on both sides.

Principal Hughes reminds us of Professor William E. Hocking's judgment that "'the intellect'" has had all too important a place in religion and that we now have a more substantial basis in "'feeling.'" On the other hand, one of Hocking's own students insists that

“‘the present mental climate is uncongenial to mysticism.’” Dr. Hughes finds a revival of interest in mysticism; it brings in an element of emotion needed in our materialistic age, and is clarifying our views of this form of piety.

Widely divergent thinkers, like Barth and Brunner on the one hand, and Paul Elmer More on the other, are ranged against it on differing grounds, but with equal positiveness, More going so far as to regard mysticism as a disease.

All through the volume it is difficult at points to tell whether the author is presenting conclusions of his own, or just trying to state fairly the views of the multitude of adherents or antagonists. “The Evangelical experience, which is of the essence of Protestantism, is, at its core, mystical.” Dr. Hughes, however, finds it difficult to classify the various types of mystical thought and experience. There are nevertheless, identical characteristics wherever mysticism is found. The most simple classification is, “Nature, Philosophical and Religious Mysticism.” Nature mysticism is rooted in divine immanence; philosophical mysticism is founded on the transcendence of God. Religious mysticism, at its best, is the quest for union with the personal God and combines the ideas of immanence and transcendence, which “are reconciled” “only in personality.”

Principal Hughes’ epistemology finds that “the quest of philosophy is really the same as that of religion.” Both are seeking “Ultimate Reality.” (One can almost see Karl Barth’s cynical smile at this.) “Here again, then, just as in the case of immanence and transcendence,” religious mysticism combines the two elements of consciousness in nature and philosophical mysticism. “In religious mysticism no one aspect of conscious life

is inoperative." Even the scientist is mystical "when sight becomes insight." Human experiences in both, nature and philosophic mysticism, when deepest and most characteristic, are distinctly religious. Therefore, while the other two forms are aspects of the deeper experience, "religious mysticism is the primal and basic type."

In our study of the meaning of mysticism, we may approach it along the line of its influence on the mystics themselves; by seeking when and why it appears in religious history as a persistent witness (we see it to-day in the scientific reasoning which puts fresh emphasis on personal experience in religion); and by an examination of the mystical experience itself. Mysticism is "an assertion of the soul's demand for immediacy" in relation to God and of "the need of love's self-surrender" in order to know God. It has its origin in "the dim consciousness of the beyond which is part of our nature."

Among the characteristics of mysticism are: the assertion of individuality, *under the sway of love*, and the consciousness of union within self and with God, resulting in creative energy and fruitful service.

The mystical theory of knowledge grounds all existence in God, with whom the human spirit has kinship. But mystical illumination is not possible through discursive reasoning. It comes "by a flash of insight." Dr. Hughes can accept this, while not feeling the need of any "special organ of divine knowledge" or disparaging the reason.

In answer to the question whether there can be different kinds of knowledge, the author finds philosophy pressing to the ideal of a "comprehensive system" of knowledge, but realizes that there are distinctions and differences in our apprehension of knowledge. Science

demands faith. Personal knowledge differs from impersonal in its determinative element of feeling. "It is along the line of feeling that we get our most real knowledge of a person." "It is the presence of this give and take of feeling" that makes the mystic certain of the personality of God and that he has won knowledge of ultimate reality.

Principal Hughes provides ground for his study in his intention; first, to establish the position that the findings of the religious consciousness have no small place in the final estimate of truth; and, second, that we are entitled to accept the convictions of the mystics that the ultimate reality with which they come into touch in their profound experiences is personal. But in doing so, the author refuses to make so deep a cleavage between intuition and reason as does, for example, Bergson. "As far as we can see," however, "the knowledge which God himself has" is intuition—He does not argue His way to a conclusion. This being so, we come nearer to the reality of things by the same kind of knowledge that God has.

Space forbids giving the author's discussion of the dialectic by which mystics endeavour to express or interpret the reality they profess to experience and know. He concludes that "if we are to judge of the mystical absolute by his influence on the life and character of the mystics," we must agree that "for them the Absolute is a fountain of creative power, a centre of self-giving love, a spiritual presence in whose fellowship is abundant life and joy."

Dr. Hughes presents the arguments of psychologists and others on the alleged abnormality of mysticism; induced states; physical causes; mental abnormalities, such as hypnotic suggestion. Psycho-analysis is con-

sidered. The alleged relation to the sex instinct is discussed.

The chapter on "The Psychology of Mystical Experience" is especially rewarding. The mystics, "with absolute unanimity," declare that the "affective or emotional aspect" is basal. This, says Dr. Hughes, finds support in psychology. The emotional element is basal in man's religious consciousness. Feeling is not only the most individualistic phase of conscious life, but also the most unitive. It is the motive power behind every act of will. This is all in accord with the teaching of Jesus and the early Christian teachers.

The author's view of religion in general and mystical states in particular "implies that the whole personality of man is involved in religious experience." "All the instinctive urges . . . make some contribution to the total experience." "Probably the dominant instinct" is self-preservation, "in this case sublimated or transformed" into "spiritual preservation and enlargement of life." But "the ground of religion in the soul is the community of essence and being which it shares with the spiritual reality which we call God, together with the reaching out of the human spirit to its source."

"To the Christian there is no final or insuperable difficulty in believing that the spirit of man can come into such close union with God . . . and He lives and energizes through man."

Mysticism has not made any contribution to ethics as such. The ideal of the mystic ethic is "self-realization through self-suppression"—an ideal far from the Humanism of our age. But the mystic has been creative; "practically all the founders of religions, the initiators of transforming movements, have been men who enjoyed some mystical experiences." And the author would greatly modify the contention that mystics have

had no influence in religious thought, although some mystics have disparaged theology. The criticisms of mysticism have been that mystics have a nebulous idea of God, disparage the Atonement, dispense with the Holy Spirit, have a depreciated sense of sin, an inadequate conception of the Church, and undervalue historic Christianity. In these criticisms Dr. Hughes finds some justification, but he reduces it to due proportions and on the basis of this sympathetic and judicial study, finds that mystics have not fallen far short of their ideal: "a union with God" through which they gained "a more assured trust in His grace and love."

This volume, long overdue, is replete with the expression of spiritual ideals of great beauty, both in quotations from mystics and by the author himself, and the reviewer is again led to express regret that the recent World Council meeting in Utrecht did not find a deeper spiritual basis, instead of an abstract metaphysic, for its constitutional message to the Churches; the mystics were overlooked or overborne.

2. THE TESTIMONY OF A MYSTIC

Perhaps we may best follow Principal Hughes' study by a clinical method, by listening to the latest message of perhaps our greatest mystic.

Rufus M. Jones in *THE ETERNAL GOSPEL*, gives us the first of a series of volumes in *The Great Issues of Life Series*. We shall look forward to them all with anticipation, for Rufus Jones, in his "second seventy," continues to grow "from grace to grace."

The eternal Gospel needs to be freed from our way of treating it by dates and "from the fascination of apocalyptic expectations." As the author interprets it, "it is the endless revelation to men of a spiritual Reality," "both immanent and transcendent, as Spirit in its

essential nature is bound to be." God is "never *wholly beyond*." Pentecost was not a great event because of tongue-speaking. It was the indubitable consciousness of the *real presence* of Christ. Greater than ecstasies is the submission of "all our faculties" "to the service of the spirit." This is just what Professor Jones reveals in this volume. "The Kingdom of God cannot be built by man alone from below up, nor, we may reverently say, can it be built by God without us, entirely and solely from Above down."

The "vehicle of revelation" is a large one. "Truth-discovering, truth-uttering minds are more than temporal, biological, empirical *phenomena*, and have their being in a *noumenal* realm of eternal reality," of which we may become interpreters. "We shall never be satisfied with any revelation of God which takes the form of an abstract universal." Spirit can be revealed only in terms of character. "A Beyond which is within us, and which yet goes on farther than any margins of what we claim as ourselves, is the Depth-Source of what characterizes us as spirit." We all may, in some feeble sense, become vehicles of revelation.

The world itself has spiritual values. "Beauty, no less than truth" takes us to God. It is "always born in *communion* with a Beyond," as Jesus described it so often. Again, the world "appears to favor moral goodness." The universe "guarantees *truth*," and the world "backs our efforts" to discover it. The author believes that the controversies over naturalism and supernaturalism have been "costly." Supernaturalism does not begin where nature ends; it is a Beyond, "which overtops this world." Nature leads us to supernature.

Revelation also comes through history. "If we are to talk intelligently about progress," "it must be in process now," "rooted in the deeps of Eternity" and "in

the true spiritual environment of man's mind." One of the greatest achievements of history has been the slow transformation of religion through the influence of ethical ideals. In this mounting course of history "the highest revelation of God" is the coming of Christ. This was a "dramatic denouement." The unseen River of God has flowed on in history.

The appearance of Jesus was "the supreme historical event," in human life, not in "unique isolation." Dr. Jones thinks of Christ "as the visible expression in time and space of the personal life and character of God." In Him we *see* God. The author finds in Christ his sense of conviction of "the reality of God." Jesus' life "is a culminating point in the Eternal Gospel."

This Gospel consequently comes through the Church, which conserves what the past has experienced. In doing this it has divided and we must hope for the recovery of its unity. And the Church "is not really an *Ecclesia* of Christ until it becomes literally and truly an organ of the spirit."

God is found in literature. Great poetry and literature is not greatest in the body of its ideas, its content. More than that, "the highest creations, the ones that are truly *revelatory*, possess an immortal and sublime quality of beauty." Imagination, in its highest sense, "is not the imaging of the psychologist," "it means reason operating on its highest levels."

The way of the mystics, in the new creation, "is the emergence in the person of *the spirit of love*." There is an unbroken line of mystics who have "a deeply grounded faith in the essential kinship between God and man." Mystical experience is the discovery of man's nature in its relations with the Eternal. There are flashes from an invisible world which illuminate the

whole meaning of life. Man is visited by the divine guest in the man's own home.

A new acquisition is gained which is "not an accumulated stock of ideas, not a logical proof," but "an intensified conviction of the reality of God."

Professor Jones makes this love of the mind for God something different from knowledge, although he himself is no mean metaphysician. But the love of the mind is not the sole or even the main channel of revelation. He sees the value of the rediscovery of the Thomist philosophy. But he says, after reviewing the great thinkers of the ages: "it is obvious that we have not been finding here" "the God who is revealed" as "the God and Father of Jesus Christ."

There have been "Equinoxes of the Spirit," when "Eternity seemed to break into time," through Buddha, Confucius, the great prophet of the Israelitish Exile, the author of the Fourth Gospel. Dr. Jones calls the latter the greatest of all Christian mystics. St. Augustine met, as none other could have done, a great crisis. Luther changed the current of history. And we must remember that all "Equinoxes" are stormy. Then came the "evangelical revival." "These dawns were not all light." "The forward push of the Spirit was met with the drag of the stuff we call 'matter.'" "But there do come moments of high visibility," "when we see great epochs in which the Hand of the Creative Worker is uniquely evident."

Here is a volume which ought to compose, strengthen and fortify the restless spirits of our day and generation.

IX

EMPIRICISM HOLDS ITS GROUND

I. AN APPEAL TO THE EARLY CHURCH

What would the early community of believers think and say were they to look in upon a meeting of the World Conference on Faith and Order? One can but also ask what their reactions would be to present-day volumes on Christian theology.

In no inconsiderable measure these queries may be answered in *THE RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH*, by P. G. S. Hopgood. Many recent and current studies in theology appeal to the early Church to support their findings, but they do not go back far enough and thus lose the real genius of the early Christian faith. Their approach is mainly literary and historical, abstract and analytical, intellectual rather than experiential. Dr. Hopwood reminds us that they consequently reduce "Christianity to a series of ideas."

The author goes back of the period of the Apostle Paul to the influence of Jesus upon His earlier followers. His book is, therefore, not only constructive, but reconstructive in both method and result. He finds that it was this personal impact which saved the Christian Gospel from becoming a mere cult among many such. The disciples based their community on their personal experience, while with Jesus. The primitive Church thus was not a "minor Jewish movement" on the one hand, nor a Hellenistic cult on the other. The author agrees with my honored teacher, Professor Frank C. Porter (*The Mind of Christ in Paul*), that there is no

such gap between Jesus and Paul as has been so often assumed, but that even Paul's seeming innovations are rooted in the early experience of the disciples. Jesus was "Lord" to them, as He became to Paul.

The author does not hesitate to set his method over against that of such writers as Foakes Jackson and Kirsopp Lake in critical terms. He says: "No one would suspect from these thorough researches that there had been any vital phenomenon such as religious experience in the formation of the Church," and thus they eliminate "the vital experiential elements which began what came to be the Christian Church," and which gave "the start to the historical processes viewed as 'Christianity.'" This leads these other scholars to their "inadequate judgments," such as that Christianity was "a synthesis between Judaism and the Graeco-Oriental thought."

In short, while Philo's disciples developed such a philosophical synthesis, but no religious movement, those of Jesus "took fire" and preached "an experienced gospel." Jesus left only impressions and the influence of contacts, which created the religious experience that gave birth to the Church. What was then and thus set in motion is what we have to-day. Jesus liberated His disciples from the "limitations and lower associations of Judaism" and thus from Judaism. All of value that entered into the primitive Church was experiential. The Atonement had its roots in the actual Crucifixion. The vision of the Kingdom of God rests on the intense awareness of the believers that they were the community of the Kingdom, and "with the decay of the eschatological hope, the Kingdom came to be realized as a present moral and spiritual experience."

But "perhaps the most significant illustration" lies in the intense experiential "consciousness of Christ," which

gives us the "essential groundwork of the evangelic traditions." There were, of course, psychologically abnormal elements in this experience, but they are thought forms and are no criterion on which to evaluate the experience. Even pathological elements would not be such criteria. A religious upheaval always has these phenomena. These are but the garments in which "a creative religious experience" is clad. Even the eschatological categories soon lost their meaning. "The permanent element is the inner religious reality which led men to live a new life hitherto undreamt of; this life centred in Jesus the Christ; the new life had brought its recipients together in His name into a union with Him and with themselves, and had fashioned them into the Church which is His body."

From the standpoint of individual psychology this experience began and continued within (quoting William James) "the feelings, acts and experiences of individual men," induced by Jesus and "claiming the fullest allegiance." But at the outset there was also a "growing group experience." "The primitive Church as a distinct group was more than the sum of the experience of its individual members, for the sharing of individual and common discovery and affirmation concerning the way of Christ heightened the consciousness of all as each inspired the other, and out of the loyalty and devotion of the many there emerged the self-consciousness of the Church as the community of salvation."

Evaluating this experience in the view of the New Psychology, and its theory of the "herd instinct" and the "mythical theory," we find that "such interpretations are entirely inadequate." They fall to the ground on the indubitable and almost uncontradicted fact of the historicity of Jesus and any sense of historical real-

ity. There are higher realms "not derived from psychology" in which we find "the utterance of God's moral and spiritual nature, within the field of history," which are ultimates.

The Church began with "the vivid awareness of the believers that God had come to their lives in Jesus the Christ as the earnest of their redemption"—an experienced gospel derived from the personality of Jesus. We need not be disturbed that such exaltation became clothed in apocalyptic garments, for these "apocalyptic hopes" faded away as "the religious horizons" took "moral and spiritual direction."

Dr. Hopwood's conclusions inevitably direct our thought towards the modifications they induce in our common estimate of Church origins. This early period cannot be considered as a "mere prelude" to the Apostolic Age. It precludes any sharp division between this impact of Jesus and the emergence of the Church. We may even find in the apocalyptic element a dynamic factor, revealing the consciousness that these disciples were making history. A sharper line of distinction must be made between Christianity and Judaism on one side and Graeco-Oriental thought on the other, and while undoubtedly Greek elements modified the Christian experience as Gentile thought expanded after the Apostolic Age, it was, nevertheless, "Palestine that was doing the influencing rather than the Greek world."

While we cannot speak of a primitive Church theology, the trinitarian conception receives some light from the early disciples: "there is a continuity of experience which was ultimately to have its implied logic thought out as the later Church set Jesus in the most vital relationship with the Eternal Father." As for Paul, "he was a convert to the primitive Church which

was thus introduced to a thinker and an interpreter" of this Christian experience.

In this religious experience of the primitive Church, grounded in Christ, "spiritual reality of the highest order was . . . placed within the reach of men" who, through His life-creating personality, established the Church on their experience in Him. They had (quoting Dorner) "experienced Christ as a Divine history of their inner being . . . had obtained access to God; in the Son they had found the Father. In this fact of their consciousness there lay for them the impulse and the necessity to place the person of Christ . . . in the closest, most vital relation to the Father."

We have in this volume, if its contentions are valid, a new page to insert in many a recognized history of the early Church.¹

2. IN THE NATURE OF RELIGION ITSELF

We may well look into the empirical nature and value of religion itself. A. Eustace Haydon, Professor of the History of Religions in the University of Chicago, gives a very different conception of the kind of experience religion yields from that of Dr. Hopwood and, indeed, a very contrasting idea of Christianity itself, both ancient and modern.

Many thinkers who have been seeking a revived or new Christian theology to meet the needs of the entire disordered world will probably not hail with satisfaction Professor Haydon's MAN'S SEARCH FOR THE GOOD LIFE, even though my friend, John Haynes Holmes, says that the religion the author presents "is undoubtedly the religion of the future." In fact, quite contrary to some contemporary theologians, Professor

¹ A recent letter from Dr. Hopwood gives the welcome news that he is making a similar study of the New Testament writers.

Haydon opens by describing his book as a statement revealing the way that "the meaning of religions has been clarified since the advent of the social sciences." Nor will they agree that "science has served the cause of religion well during the last half-century," and that its methods and materials interpret religion. While they deplore the influence of science, this author declares that it is "only by cooperation of all the sciences" that religious development can be understood. These new theologians, indeed, declare that this very "co-operation" has emasculated Christianity, the only true religion.

Professor Haydon tells us that Christianity, like all others, was a "culture religion" and can be understood only in its historical relation to other culture religions, thus, it would seem, denying the special revelation on which Christianity has rested *sui generis*. In Christianity, we are told, a new religion was just added, to charge "the intellectual climate with intolerance . . . and make the . . . study of religions difficult." Its proponents were, however, "brilliant intellectuals" who successfully challenged other religions, and forced students of religions "to work within the boundaries of that canon."

Ultimately, three great religions, Christianity, Islam, and Judaism, "each intrenched behind the authority of divine revelation," faced each other as rivals, and "a belated champion" of Zoroastrianism made the same claim.

The author believes that "the first half of the eighteenth century marks the turning point in the study of religions," as scholars "began to be impatient with *a priori* assumptions and partisan bias." Christianity became also "milder and more generous," while science began its successful career. Thus "the religious think-

ers of the Western World" were forced to come to terms with "the idea of a universal rule of natural law and the idea of progress," and there was a swift increase in knowledge of world cultures. Over all this age-long quest, however, the assumptions of Christianity that religion "is a revelation from a divine source of truth, that relation to God and the supernatural is the central meaning of religion . . . and that Christianity is the final and highest religion," permitted the history of religions to be "no more than an elaborate and refined form of Christian apologetic."

The sympathetic understanding of religions is thus a modern achievement. At first philosophers had "joined with theologians to put science in its place," but the fear of science at last gave way to "a growing respect for its achievements" and there ensued "a peace of acceptance or reconciliation."

Following an anthropological discussion which long prevailed, there was "a slow drift away from the interpretation of religion inherited from the Christian past," and finally we reach the author's thesis, "the realization that all beliefs and practices revolved around the values which men were trying to win removed the last barrier to the understanding of the nature of religions." (That is to say, they rest on "Man's Search for the Good Life.")

The ultimate origins of this search "are buried together beneath the dust of a million years," and to understand it man's religious history needs to be viewed "as a phase of the age-long adjustment of human beings, in social groups, to the actual and imaginary forces and facts of the unfolding natural world," the ideal and program of religion always carrying the stamp of social sanction. Its ideal "consists of those values visualized as the perfect fulfilment of socially approved

desires." "Ideal, technique, and world view follow the changing moods of culture," and we to-day are experiencing "the emphasis of the early world—an interest in winning the values of a satisfying social life on earth." In it we have the tools of the sciences and we are seeking a "new embodiment" for religion to make it the central, unifying bond of culture. "Religions are the modes, endlessly varied and changing, in which the desires of men have been socially oriented by approved means toward ideal values in relation to cosmic background."

Among the values of the ideals in early religions was the persistence, in the face of bleak despair, of the faith that there would come a "perfect society free from evils and enfolded with justice, love, and peace," and that is what the advanced religions are still seeking. The difference between early religions and those of high culture is most marked in the area of technique, and the technique for actualizing social values "is still the most pressing of all the problems of mankind." When this is found, "the emotional life of man will have no more need for ceremonies of the traditional type," but rather for "a celebration of the joy of living."

Man's early quest was "to win a life of happiness and security," "but even with material success assured" he was obstructed by social maladjustments and this set the stage "for the flight of religions from this world" and there was "an interlude of frustration." "The transfer of supreme values to the spiritual world was the most momentous event of human history" when "a perfect life hereafter" became more important than "the good life here." This was so with the religion of Israel. Christianity, after a period of secular control, "resumed its characteristic form," channeling "the miraculous grace which gives assurance of eternal bless-

edness beyond the gates of death." The universe was "safe for final human fulfilment." Religions, however, still sought "a satisfying life for man on the earth," and in our modern age the great religions have resumed the quest. It is, therefore, of the highest importance that we hold fast to this "essential purpose of religions through the ages," for this quest "is the glory of man."

The disordered world demands "a new and vital embodiment of religion," and this is "not the first time when theologies have died that religions might be re-born." In the light of scientific thought, the eternal truths of the past are discovered to be transient and "pass into the shadows of relativity."

But the impact of scientific fact is not the end of the story. If it were, religions would die. In the cosmic process we seek a flying goal. The modern waste of human lives cannot be ignored longer by religious men. Science has transformed the world into a neighbourhood. Thus far "no religion has found leaders wise enough to point the way to a new synthesis of culture."

Fundamentalists defy the rising tide of change and their finality would bring "the evening twilight of religions." The modernist has not the art for radical re-orientation. The iconoclasts exaggerate the menace of outgrown ideas. The practical idealists are the ones who are "laying the foundation . . . for an effective embodiment of religion." The success of the modern generation in advancing toward maturity in the art of living is retarded "by the failure of religious leaders to distinguish between religion as the way of winning the good life and religion in some particular traditional embodiment."

Finally, "the task of religion is to make the shared quest for the good life the controlling, unifying center of the human life process," as men, understanding this,

“turn from dreams of perfect worlds” to the task “of actualizing the good life for man on the earth.”

The reader may wish to compare this view with—let us say, the Westminster Confession. And it will hardly go deeply enough to give encouragement to William Adams Brown in his plea for theology as the unifying principle in university education, or to President Hutchins’ proposal that metaphysics should be that principle.²

² See Chapter XII.

X

THE SOCIAL GOSPEL SURVIVES

I. CHRISTIANITY A RELIGION OF REVOLUTION

There is as yet little sign that the exponents of social Christianity will plead guilty to the charge that they have induced the crisis of the world. Their contention is that it is because the Church has not listened to them that the world will now not listen to it. Indeed, attention recently has been called to the fact that it was Josiah Strong who, many years ago, uttered words of prophecy now being fulfilled.¹

In *REBEL RELIGION*, by B. C. Plowright, a London Congregational pastor, the author says he has come to feel that the assumptions of the Christian communions concerning their relations to secular life "would not be substantiated in the teaching of Jesus." They have accepted "the doctrine of the primacy of political community." He believes "that Communism presents to Christianity an entirely new challenge," albeit he is not himself a Communist either intellectually or religiously. In an introduction, Professor John MacMurray expresses the judgment that "other movements, Communism in particular, have taken over our function and rejected us" and he comes near stating the thesis of the volume in his belief that "the only ground that is left to us is to accept the Communist purpose, while insisting that the Communists do not know how to accomplish it."

¹ See *Steps Toward the World Council*, Charles S. Macfarland, Revell, 1938.

Mr. Plowright begins by the assertion that three basic ideas: (1) the idea of the meaning of life; (2) the idea of progress; and (3) the idea of Democracy, have been dethroned and repudiated. The essentially other-worldly meaning of life has gone. "War and Psychology between them slew the idea of progress." Democracy, as a political machine, has broken down and left the modern world "disorganized and in the last state of repair," "its spiritual foundations" having been "sapped and undermined"; and "never was the ruin so complete." The War "did little more than speed up a process which was already taking place."

The author defines the aims and methods of Communism in these terms:

1. "Its main concern is for personality in community.
2. "It is essentially transnational and missionary in character.
3. "Its basic belief is in the self-transforming nature of matter itself.
4. "It believes that economic organization determines thought and that inevitably that development of economic organization means the triumph of the proletariat.
5. "This development takes place by slow evolution culminating in crisis, *i.e.*, its time-scheme is evolution plus revolution.
6. "Coercion is necessary" and "prevents much more hardship than it inflicts."
7. "It believes that service to the whole community is the sole justification for existence of the individual. (Let the reader compare this with No. 1.)
8. "Its general tendency is pacific; in the time of crisis, however, it believes in both the necessity and legitimacy of the class wars."

Mr. Plowright finds achievement in Russia which is doing "what early Christianity did—it is outliving,

outhinking and outdoing its contemporary civilization." "The Church in Russia did but suffer the inevitable fate which any church has always suffered—and always will—when it ceases to live by the light of its own inspiration and principles and enters into an alliance, tacit or avowed, with those who represent and control the existing order." *But*—"what we have in Russia to-day is not Communism but State Capitalism," "a stage between Capitalism and Communism." The author believes also that "Fascism, both in Germany and Italy, has accomplished great things." Following these analyses, the question is put: "With which solution does the genius of Christianity most nearly agree," Communist or Fascist?

A chapter follows on Jesus' idea of the Kingdom of God. If Jesus had been speaking of industry instead of the Sabbath, he would have said: "Industry was made for man, and not man for industry." Leadership there might be, but no "external or arbitrary authority in the Christian community." "The Christian Fellowship is Christ's alternative to political community." "Whatever Christians may have made of the Sermon on the Mount, here is no creed for tame idealists." "The final picture we get of the Holy Community, the Christian fellowship," is "of relatively poor people," related by love. Jesus never pretended that this love could be acceptable to the secular political community. Indeed his was an "alternative to political society." He did not trust to Christians "working in and through" political communities, but to be "another community."

Space forbids giving even an outline of Dr. Plowright's comparative analysis of Christianity, Communism and Fascism. Each considers itself in opposition to the other two. Both these other political orders agree that they cannot stay in the world together. It

is clear that Fascism is in opposition to Christianity and the Communist believes that he and the Christian cannot both live.

Communism differs from Christianity at four points:

1. "The conviction that personality is necessarily determined by economic factors challenges the Christian conviction. . . ."

2. "The conviction that dialectical materialism is the ultimate principle . . . conflicts with the Christian conviction that the ultimate source of life is God, who is Spirit."

3. "The belief in the use of coercion in time of crisis is opposed to the Christian law of Love."

4. "Its substitution of class barriers for national, means that it is Christian universalism but half carried through and worked out."

Mr. Plowright makes out about the best case for Communism that we have yet had, but sees its weaknesses. The Communist, it must be admitted, "has solid ground for his conviction that Christianity detracts from social enthusiasm." On the other hand, the Communist leaves out human realities of experience and does not understand the reality of Jesus. The Communist, in his concept of evolution, interprets the end by the beginning, while the Christian interprets the beginning in the light of the end. Communism is far from being scientific and is at bottom dogmatic. Both Communism and Christianity believe in a community created by direct personal relationship in practical brotherhood, in concern for human welfare and in freedom from arbitrary authority. They differ in their fundamental assumptions. One sees matter, the other sees the spirit of God; one dialectical materialism, the other dialectical moralism; Communism sees man in his own strength, Christianity sees the need of redemption and communion with God. These alternatives lead to

their differing methods; brotherhood by violence and brotherhood by love.

Nevertheless, our very criticism of both Fascism and Communism constitute a boomerang against Christian civilization and the Church. The Church has grafted Christianity on to a community life whose fundamental assumptions are its opposite, has dealt with symptoms, not with the disease; has worked at the circumference instead of the centre.

The early Church was sharply conscious of radical differences between it and the community. Its later relation with the State divided human personality. One part of the man served God; the other part the State. "Spirit was insulated from body and body from spirit." "The Church caught the conception of sovereignty and authority from its ally-opponent" and became "a spiritual counterpart of the secular Roman Empire." The Church accepted a society based on coercion and self-interest and Christianity could be expressed only within the limits of society and had to use its prescribed means and methods. It became finally content with gaining a political democracy, not an industrial one.

Thus the Christian ideal and aim was whittled down. All it asked in business was honesty and stewardship to help the Church. Its assumed need of wealth obscured Jesus' teaching about riches. At last the divorce between the world of God and that of affairs became complete. Anatole France is reported to have said, "I have spent my life twisting dynamite into curl-papers." Whether that was so or not, "when we compare the rebel faith of Jesus with the timid, acquiescent message characteristic of the Christian Church to-day . . . we, too, have twisted dynamite into curl-papers."

But the time has come to end this "covenant with death." Communism forces it by its "achievement of

a community which is embodying much of the Christian ideal in practice." The question is: "Is Communism a truer expression of Christian principle than our own Western civilization?" The answer is that as an order of society it is "the most Christian form" we have yet had and is "far more Christian than our own."

If the Church is committed to the present régime, its overthrow will be that of the Church, and "the judgment of the people will be the judgment of God," for the Church, like the world, is being judged. "Until we do away with secularism in the Church we cannot deal effectively" with a secular world. We must take Jesus at His word. "Communism must find a spiritual basis for its material practice and Christianity must find a material expression of its faith in God." "Each possesses the element which alone can make the other fruitful." This, our author evidently believes, is the way to "the Christian fellowship" of Jesus.

Yes, it means persecution and distress. Sadly, "its bitterest foes will be those of its own household." It will have to take its life in its hands. The new Reformation will not cut across Church frontiers on doctrine, "but on the eternal implications of our faith." The Church will become something like "a spiritual Communism." The issue of the world's fate should be decided—can be decided—by the Church, if it follows its Founder.

This book indicates advance. We long ago got used to "Christian Socialism." Is it now to be "Christian Communism"?

The preacher or layman who reads this volume will either get mad or be disquieted in conscience. While the author has both over-idealized Communism and over-depreciated the Church, he has made it clear that the "German Christians" who *heil Hitler* have accepted

a politico-social idea which is far, far more unchristian than the Communism they fear and that is much farther away from the "positive Christianity" they ascribe to Fascism. Better a Stalin who says there is no God than an apotheosized Hitler. I urge that some preacher who has a body of industrial laymen get a group of them together to study this book—and see what happens. I believe that if I were back in my last pastorate, that is what I would do. It was in an industrial city and I learned there long ago that Christianity is a rebel religion.

While I content myself with trying to tell my readers what the author has said, I cannot forbear expressing the feeling that there is a road open to the Church upon what I would call a spiritual ideal of democracy, which I think is more promising than that of a Communism which has already become authoritarian and dogmatic and which is so far committed to class warfare and hatred. In any event this new Communism would call for a new terminology. But I do revel in these courageous books. The preachers I worry about are the complacent ones.

2. CHRISTIANITY AND ECONOMICS

Sir Josiah Stamp (now Lord Stamp) is entirely unconcerned with the recent neo-theologians who would solve the crisis problems by wresting Christianity from any relation whatever with the "world," in his *CHRISTIANITY AND ECONOMICS*. At the same time, as Rufus M. Jones observes in the introduction, the author does not regard as the "primary business of Christianity" the "spinning out" of "schemes and programs for a change of systems to be administered by unchanged men," but believes rather that "the good heart may

prove to be the condition for good heads to find the way into the good life."

This does not mean that Lord Stamp, as an economist and business man, complacently contents himself with admonishing preachers to stick to the "simple Gospel" or reminding them that they are uninformed on political economy. He is aware that preachers assert or assume that if men gave their hearts to Christ, the world's problems would all be solved; that business men are wont to dismiss the issue by saying that being a Christian is for one's private life, but too "impracticable" for business; that the economist says it is not his business to take the goodness of things and measures into account; and that the historian declares religion—even Christianity—to have been responsible for "hatred, war and persecution." But the author is not content to leave the situation without an attempt "to review the contacts between the ideals of Christianity and the working of the economic machine."

The complexity of the task is indicated by the several possible ways of approach. We may assert that Jesus, "in omniscience, laid down precepts which are valid for all aspects of life, in all places and in all ages." Or one might pick out the unsatisfactory features of economic life and apply the Christian principles of "self-denial, pity and charity." A third method would be to review history and attempt to "deduce what difference Christianity has made to men's practice and ideals." We might construct a model Christian and seek for the kind of a communal life in which such a man could express himself. A fifth method works from the other end and determines what economic factors are physical and physiological and which are psychological and moral, to see how far the Christian ethic "can be substituted for other similar variables" in economic

society. Lord Stamp has recourse to all these possibilities.

He gives a clear survey of the economic background in which Jesus' teaching was given and warns us not to modernize Jesus by putting our own ideas into His message. Palestine was desperately overpopulated and overtaxed. It is estimated that the people were taxed to forty or more per cent of income, while the standard of living was low. Under these conditions, what did Jesus teach concerning the economic life? He spoke of the unequal distribution of wealth, but "He dwelt most emphatically upon the moral risks of wealth to the individual owner." He recognized that riches were sometimes gained by wrong means and that this called for restitution, "but beyond that did not specifically condemn the *process* of acquiring wealth." He put high value on the "*disposal* of wealth," but by volition and not by compulsion. "The value of the act lay in *its initiative*—it was not a social process." Jesus did not suggest that poverty was "*socially curable*." Jesus did not condemn the institutions and human relationships of His day—"He accepted them with a rather astonishing acquiescence." He insisted that the authority given to each person by a higher authority "must not be exceeded or abused, and the duty imposed must not be shirked."

The author's conclusions are:

1. Jesus "was so preoccupied with the spirit of man that He accepted the rather indefensible economic conditions" . . . "and taught the importance of spiritual compensations" rather than to inspire the temporal revolutions that others were urging.

2. He did not outline an ideal social system,

"nor can one be directly inferred from His teaching."

3. He left no directions for transforming the social state and the early Christians made no agitation against social evils.

4. "The idea of *material* progress" as a developing feature of life was not present during Jesus' life. If Jesus had outlined an economic scheme "it would have been outgrown a dozen times," for an economic system is a blend of human capacity with the forces of nature and the blend must change with each age.

Does all this mean that there is no close link between Christianity and economic life? No, but we must seek it in a different way. Jesus did give germinal ideas—even explosive ideas—of conduct and interrelationship; (a) "God's relation to men was universal, without distinctions of race"; (b) "there was a new way of life or set of values in Jesus Christ"; (c) "men must be thought of as objects of service and devotion."

In determining between two sets of economic conditions, which is more in accord with Christianity, we may have two tests: First, is one a better medium for the exercise of individual Christian virtues? Second, is one a system which conforms to certain relationships to Christ and to God? Is the economic relationship between men that the system is built on consistent with the spiritual relationship implied in the brotherhood of man and the living and death of Christ for the sake of all?

Lord Stamp gives an informing historical review of Christian doctrine and life and economic system in the past, especially in the Middle Ages. Speaking of the antislavery movement, he says, "the sad history of

Christian doctrine"—in finding proof texts for slavery—has given the secularist a powerful argument against religion, and yet "the ethic which impelled reform was beyond all question the Christian ethic." Indeed, "Christian ideals have permeated society until non-Christians, who claim to live a 'decent life' without religion, have forgotten the origin of the very content and context of 'decency.'" And while Christianity gives no economic "precepts," it has furnished powerful "principles" in the moral improvement of Western civilization.

Our conclusions, thus far, are: (1) that Christ's teaching had primarily a spiritual and not an economic bearing; (2) that applying the letter of Scripture to economic affairs generally fails; (3) Scripture does not favour any particular plan or form of economic life; (4) at the same time Western civilization has been largely conditioned in its moral progress by the Christian impetus and its doctrines of pity, justice and the rights of the individual soul.

What, then, may we find to be the fundamental principles which may be applied to the problems of every age? (1) The brotherhood of man; (2) the principle of stewardship; (3) the doctrine of the good neighbour; (4) the equality of the value of each individual soul. We are under obligation "to ascertain the positive content of brotherly relationship and to bring all men into it." This sense of obligation was the "underlying solvent of the idea of slavery." Good neighbourliness covers a considerable area of opportunity and demand. The author recognizes the limited area in which the Christian may apply these two principles.

Lord Stamp would carry the idea of stewardship beyond the usual interpretation of it as the giving of one's wealth. "A closer study of the direction of ex-

penditure and saving and their effects no longer fortuitously following lines of least resistance and moral worth would raise the requirements of the consumer to an ethical pitch which would make the Christianizing of productive economics a much simpler thing."

Where, now, does the contemporary Christian Church stand to-day—what is its attitude? The author gives an appraisal of the Encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno* as representing the position of the Roman Catholic Church and of the report dealing with economics by the Conference on Church, Community and State at Oxford, 1937, as giving the Protestant attitude (the author neglected to note that this conference included the Eastern Orthodox Churches). As the result of his study of these and other documents, he finds ordered reasoning, a common basis of criticism and condemnation of our economic life, despite differences of emphasis. There is more divergence of view over practical remedies and "an unequal trust in the power or duty of the Church to prescribe them."

Lord Stamp gives his own general considerations and conclusions. On industrial conditions in the condemned "machine age," he says: "The machine is not to be indicted as inherently materialistic—"with the exception of language it is the greatest instrument of co-operative community that men have yet discovered.'" As to the "profit-motive," "those who base a great deal, economically, upon maldistribution of wealth as the chief *social* evil are barking up the wrong tree. Improving production matters far more than fidgeting over fractions of distribution." Ministers complain much of the "prevalence of luxury." This can be corrected only by one's Christian sense of how to spend money.

Turning the question around, shall economics

“‘bother about’” Christianity? This is simply asking whether economics shall be concerned with “ends and values” or only with “means and methods.” If we are to mix economics and ethics, and if the economist will not undertake the task, “he cannot complain if the parson essays it,” even if the parson does him an injustice. A study of “‘economic-ethics’” might be fruitful.

Lord Stamp believes that church conferences endeavouring to produce schemes of social betterment are of value “provided that resolutions of this kind do not overshadow spiritual and church questions, and provided that the same earnestness in mastering facts and economic principles is shown as would be accorded to any other complex or scientific study.” “Half-baked schemes with no recognition of practical necessities and the facts of human nature, only bring ridicule on the Church and belittle its power to get its spiritual message delivered to the world.”

The author is depressed by “the trend of the Church” towards a “queer reversion to certain forms of collectivism, which are only the same selfishness over again at a different level of grouping, and which merely push the Christian problem a little further off.” This tendency towards “a ruthless regimentation of opinion” hardly squares with the Christian sense of the value of the individual. Meanwhile, cults of all kinds take the place of the Church in giving spiritual ministration.

Preventing men from unrighteousness by process of law—“righteousness by statute”—may be done, “but that is not Christianity.” The goal of Church and Christian is beyond any compulsory standard.

We now have the problem of “group ethics,” and the mission of the Church is to see how far the groups themselves can be an extension of the principles for individuals. It is when the Christian ethic moves many,

or a majority of, men that it becomes a powerful economic factor, but "*there is no absolute Christian scheme of society.*" Christian teaching is the principle of "creative action." "No one form of government is in itself specifically Christian." "You have only a Christian 'way' with a community of real Christians."

In emphasizing the injury to social progress inflicted by man's low standards, we must not fall into the opposite error of assuming that all the faults of the social order are due to moral backwardness. There are remedial defects in the machine, "which could be made more Christian without any more Christianity," and we need a better intelligence to correct them. "Good hearts are no substitute for good heads, but they are the condition of good heads leading into the good life."

While to-day much of the benevolent and social work which was once the responsibility of the Church has been assumed by the State, the Church "blazed the trail," showed the value of social regeneration, and educated public opinion. Christian doctrine "has released economic practices from the inhibition of the letter," purged economic life, and helped establish a society "in which alone a complex industrial system can work." "It has achieved, by the individual heroism of a few and the acquiescence of the many, a magnificent pioneer task in salvaging the individual wrecks of that system, in arousing a public conscience about the victims of its very progress, and has put those tasks into the very fabric of government."

But it now has a much more serious task. "It has to understand the implications of international trade, and the differential fortunes of nations, if it is to prescribe a new extension of brotherhood—it has to make up its mind about nationality." The problem of the interdependence of men and of nations calls for penetration

by the “‘mind that was in Christ Jesus.’” “Economist and preacher alike, humble with the record of past failures before them, bold and visionary with the still greater record of Christian evolution to encourage them, may well join hands as the architects of a nobler age and an advancing purpose.”

3. THREE LEVELS OF SOCIETY

As I have occasionally observed, Protestants ought to be better informed than they are on Roman Catholic thought, especially in Social Science. Professor Paul Hanly Furfey in *THREE THEORIES OF SOCIETY*, gives us the views and thought-processes of the younger, and I should say, progressive Catholics.

Professor Furfey finds social thought in extreme confusion, not only among people in general but among experts and the “lack of agreement” is “on the most fundamental issues.” He hopes to shed light by dropping the study of society itself, to discuss the validity of the various ways of studying society, and discover the several parts that may be played by poetic insight, by objective scientific methods, by theology and philosophy. “Many different techniques must concur in order to reach a really satisfactory view of society.”

Of the three theories of society, the first is “Positivistic Society,” exemplified in “the Modern Success-Ideal.” We must explain social phenomena “in terms of human motivation.” The essence of society is in “the common purpose pursued by its members.” The movement inaugurated by Comte sees its culmination in our time. “The spirit of modern American society is behaviouristic” and the phenomenological method is dominant.

Professor Furfey proposes, in contrast, to pursue the

teleological method, to study the way in which people react to external aspects of human life.

“The modern man’s ambition is to succeed.” What is the trend of that success? This success-ideal is a manner of life, a scale of values, a system of ethics, almost a culture in our competitive society. The success-class enjoys disproportionate privileges and is called on to bear commensurate responsibilities. “It is this class, with its meanness and its courage, its selfishness, its altruism and its complicated etiquette, from which our modern civilization “takes its character.” Thus the success gives society its *telos*.

The Essence of the Success-Ideal is viewed in “two mutually contradictory ways.” Some see it as just consummate selfishness. Others find values in it; leadership in good causes and ideals, the setting of “a model for ideal living.” It is neither wholly good nor wholly bad. It is “a sort of compromise” and this is its weakness. “It is morally uninspiring and mediocre.” It appears to be beneficial to society. It seems economically unavoidable. But the author believes “that emphasis on the modern success-ideal with its accompanying fierce competition is not a necessary feature of a highly developed economic society.” And Professor Furley proceeds to consider co-operatives and “redistribution of income” in ways that would startle conservative men of business. “The success-ideal . . . involves widespread failure and suffering for the majority of society.” But is it satisfying even for the successful few? When we examine it, we find its satisfaction superficial. It is “attainment satisfaction,” and “post-attainment satisfaction,” and is “not a satisfactory psychological basis for society.” The ideal itself is all wrong. It follows Comte’s positivism, rejecting inquiry into causes. It deals with only the obvious, on

what "is discoverable without great subtlety or insight." Such is most of our university training to-day.

The second theory considered the author terms "Noëtic Society," the seeking of reality by the mind. While we cannot accept Plato's seeming doctrine of hypostatized ideas, we find a better solution of the problem of universal ideas in Aristotle and the Schoolmen. Plato, however, is never out of date, because "he concentrated his attention on the very essence of things." "The path to deep knowledge leads inevitably to the vicinity of the Divine Reality," as the thinker's "vision becomes increasingly clear and pure and unified until it partakes (to the extent possible for men) of the single, transcendent, perfect act of divine knowing."

Bergson and others seek access to deep knowledge through "some sort of nonintellectual approach," by intuition. But we must avoid the kind of "wishful thinking" that leads the white man to believe in his superiority. It leads to present day destructive ultranationalism. The Communist and Fascist countries "did not have the patience and the balance necessary to face the problem (of society) rationally and so they turned from the evils of a positivistic society" to one based on "wishful thinking."

Professor Fursey follows with a clarifying analysis of the Aristotelian and Thomistic Doctrine of Noësis, concluding that it is "the great signal triumph of the human mind" which makes "materialism forever impossible." Noëtic Society cultivates contemplation, seeks depth of moral insight, leads to common purpose and efficient co-operation. This exposition, however, the author says is but hypothetical. It is what would be if a fully noëtic society were established. The fact is that "society has pretty consistently avoided noësis." Real and beautiful as it is, it cannot overcome

mental inertia or outwit the passions. "The only hope of humanity is the hope of a saviour."

The third and final theory is "Pistic Society"; faith. Positivism is "mean and commonplace." *Noësis* is "beautiful but unworkable." Faith differs from knowledge. And now, of course, with a Roman Catholic author, we are led straight to the *Church*. Only when one has convinced himself that the Christian revelation is true has he acquired a basis for further certainty, when he is convinced "of the authority of the Catholic Church and of his own duty of accepting her dogmas as revealed truth."

"Faith is a supernatural manner of knowing" and "cannot be explained by the natural activity of man's faculties." It is reached by contemplation. The acceptance of the Church's "whole social doctrine" is "a first step towards a pistic society." It comes (how unrealistic some social theorists will think this!) by "meditation." It takes us far from a world dominated by men who urge "a destiny which is without value." It finds Charity to be the greatest of all values. Love of God cannot then be separated from love of neighbour, as one sees God's presence in his neighbour's eyes. We must break away from the activity of the world around us. The Kingdom of God is this Catholic social order in which Church and State and all minor groupings find health, peace, and security, all these being "subordinate to man's true supernatural end" as the dominant purpose of society. That is the meaning of the Mass.

This Pistic Society, however, is not the ultimate Catholic ideal. That is in heaven. But "we must strive to make our human society here on earth as like as possible to the beatific society of heaven." The ideal is "to reproduce heaven on earth."

It has been impossible, in this brief review to reproduce the wealth of philosophic thinking, the lofty idealism, the spiritual sense, along with the social vision that characterize this volume. And while it would be easy to enter a *caveat* on the author's identification of the spiritual life with the "authority" of the Church, I feel no temptation to let any such dialectic disturb the impression of beauty, truth and goodness which the book makes upon me as a whole. The author is just past forty and I venture to predict that we shall hear from him with increasing light in days to come.²

² See analysis of Fursey's *Fire on the Earth*, in *Trends of Christian Thinking*.

XI

UNITY IN A DAY OF CRISIS

I. PROGRESS BY POLEMIC

I once sought to convince J. Gresham Machen that he would be more useful if less controversial. He countered on me by saying that all truth was the result of controversy. President George W. Richards by no means seeks to establish this formula in his CREATIVE CONTROVERSIES IN CHRISTIANITY. Indeed I almost wish he had selected the alternative which he suggests, "clarifying," instead of "creative"; and, as we all know, Dr. Richards' technique is never that used by Professor Machen.

The author first reminds us that the real controversies of Christian history have been on really great issues—the nature of God and man; God essentially human and man essentially divine. The fellowship between God and man was disrupted by wilful man assuming the place of God, resulting in cosmic and human tragedy. "The last act" in this tragedy "is reached not by man's finding God but by God's finding man," through Christ. (We have here one of those touches which led Henry Nelson Wieman to characterize Richards as pre-eminently a Barthian. And while I have thought this not quite accurate, Dr. Richards often seems to me to be trying to accept Barth's negatives and antitheses against his own will and thus, at times, to be self-contradictory.)

Professor Richards begins with Socrates and Amos, "Philosopher and Prophet." "Both defiantly preached

and taught a way of life contrary to history"; the rulers therefore poisoned one and stoned the other. Socrates "sought what *ought to be*," Amos "saw it," and Christ "was" it. Socrates discovered man's soul, God in the soul and man's destiny in God. Philosophy, says Dr. Richards, "at its best is a *preparatio evangelica*, a hunger of the soul and a confession of inability to satisfy it"—a pregnant sentence.

Amos marks a turning point in Hebrew prophecy, as does Socrates in Greek philosophy. In the progress of prophetic thought as to God's character, "Amos was the end of an old and the beginning of a new era." He was the prophet of ethical monotheism. God was inescapable, not only in His might and right, but in His mercy. A new sense of sin came with an ethical God.

The culmination of prophecy was in Jesus. While He proclaimed His Gospel in current messianic terms, its content went far beyond messianic hopes. The question, "'Who is this?' involves far more than the historian, the biologist, the psychologist, the dogmatician, the mystic, the moralist, can answer." "What the prophets saw, the cults offered, the philosophers thought, the people groped after and wished for" were in Jesus in larger content than their dreams. We find our way only by "the daily facing of life . . . from the viewpoint of Jesus in the light of a God-like Christ, and a Christ-like God." The impulse to this consecration is *love*. That is what Jesus is.

Dr. Richards finds the creeds "a hindrance to faith" when they are a substitute for love. "The universality and the eternity of the Nazarene is the love of God in Him." Jesus belongs to all ages and He would not have understood our terms and creeds, including "the Chalcedonian Formula."

What was the mighty conflict between the ancient

world and the Christian Gospel? Christianity "absolutely rejected the totalitarian claims of the pagan state." To-day we have the old conflict of Church and State in new forms.

Paul's "conviction became the master light of all his seeing, thinking and doing, that the Messiah in heaven was Jesus of Nazareth crucified." In his vision Paul also saw himself brought to judgment. Paul "demolished the two pillars on which Jewish theocracy rested." Jesus was the end of the law. He denied that the Jews were the elect nation. Further controversy came with the Jewish Christians. Had Paul compromised "he would have renounced the essence of the Gospel." It was "the battle of the ages." Paul's final controversy was with the Gentile Christians. Dr. Richards finds the issue before the Church today "not essentially different" from those of the first and second centuries.

Modern philosophers fail to understand the Holy Spirit of the New Testament and the creeds. "They reduce Him to the spirit of man—his intellect, will and feeling." Modern theologians have not gone much further. The battle between the modernists or liberals, and the Barthians will persist until they agree on—"whether there is a way from man to God or whether the only way is from God to man." Dr. Richards thinks that few of us will see the end of this "epistemological" war.

The author distinguishes between a spirit pervading the cosmos and the Holy Spirit. Unlike the Barthians, I should say, Dr. Richards believes that the Holy Spirit "is in man at all times." But he seems to think that the Holy Spirit in the New Testament and the creeds is unique. He quotes Bacon on "'the Spirit as an affluence from the risen Jesus.'" It is having "'the mind of Christ.'" After a long and rather circuitous discus-

sion, with some seeming strain at over-distinction, Dr. Richards seems really to come back to this simple (and to the reviewer, adequate) definition. In this chapter the author is, of course, trying to define the indefinable and express the inexpressible, to submit to analysis the wind which bloweth where it listeth and the spirit of which we cannot know "whence it cometh" or "whither it goeth." Probably, for most of us, his simple phrase, "the mind of Christ," will do more than his metaphysics to create "the one safeguard against a petrified orthodoxy, a magical sacramentalism and humanism in its intellectual, moral and mystical forms" and thus exalt "faith as a divine act in man, and the Christian life as controlled by the Spirit of Christ."

But nevertheless, Professor Richards goes on "in quest of a Christian metaphysic." He admits, however, at once, that "at best one expects only an ethics from a metaphysic." What the author really seeks is a theology. Yet he goes back to the Arian controversy. He believes that "a rational definition of Christ's person was necessary." (Which the reviewer, like the early Christians, doubts, in the sense implied.) "With the aid of the Logos a Christology was devised (note the term), which conserved the unity of God and the deity of Jesus."

We can all probably agree with Dr. Richards that these controversies had to be, even though we may wonder whether or not they all have been either creative or clarifying. In fact, some of us, while rejecting Arius, do not need to embrace the mind of Alexander. The author believes that two questions had to be finally decided: "(1) How the divine in Jesus is related to the supreme God. (2) How the human in Jesus was related to the divine in Jesus"; the old question of "nature and substance," which still persists in our own day.

While evidently agreeing with Carlyle that Arianism would have ultimately emasculated Christianity, Dr. Richards concludes—happily for most of us—that “the dogmas of the Trinity, the deity and the humanity of Christ, free will and grace, are paradoxes which reason cannot comprehend.”

In the sombre picture of the Middle Age, we are confronted, at its threshold, “by the greatest crisis in human history.” Dr. Richards treats this period with the clear mind of the historian, from Augustine’s *City of God*, to the Renaissance, “the rediscovery of man,” and the Reformation, “the rediscovery of God.” In the beginning “the formative factor was the striving for *catholicity* and its corollary, *uniformity*.” “The ripe fruit of scholasticism was the *Summa Theologiae* of Thomas Aquinas,” “an intellectual catholicity that was to control the mind of man forever.” “The creations of catholicity—a universal Church, a universal state, a universal philosophy, a universal rule of life—find man’s intellectual centre of gravity not in himself, in his convictions and conscience, but in the authoritative institutions which embrace and control his life; the political and religious order to which he belongs is less a product of his activity than something which is imposed ready-made upon him. Unconditional and unquestioning devotion are required of him.” All seemed to be on the verge of realization. Attempted by force it was found untenable. The Holy Roman Empire is seen in contrast to modern democracy. There were two conflicting tendencies; “catholicity, supernaturalism and other-worldliness of the decadent Greco-Roman world; the other was the individualism, the naturalism . . . of the youthful nations of western Europe.” The former, theism modified by humanism, and the latter, humanism modified by theism. “The one stands for

authority and obedience, the exaltation of the institution and the repression of the individual; the other, for the autonomy and free expression of the individual reason and conscience."

Renaissance and Reformation had to come. The dynamic of the new age was in the rediscovery of the New Testament and its teaching; "an age in which nationalism took the place of cosmopolitanism and denominationalism of Catholicism, the one largely controlled by humanism, the other, relatively at least by evangelicalism."

To-day we are in a crisis perhaps more decisive than any before. And what next? Imperialism? Third International or Fascism? The patching up of the existing order? Or "shall we go forward, intelligently and freely accepting the best of the past, incorporating the best of the present, blending catholicity and individualism, authority and freedom" into a better order? The fate of humanity depends on the answer.

The fundamental question of theology is "continuity or discontinuity; evolution or creation; immanence or transcendence; monism or dualism; reason or revelation; the world and word of man or the world and word of God." Dr. Richards finds these antitheses in Schleiermacher and Barth. They run through the history of the Church and are as irreconcilable to-day as the contradiction between Luther and Erasmus. Indeed, one who understands the latter can see that between Schleiermacher and Barth. The reviewer regrets that space forbids an analysis of this deeply interesting chapter. He agrees with the author that "only an act of omnipotent grace can turn the American philosopher and theologian from" Schleiermacher and Ritschl to Kierkegaard and Barth, and does not look for any such act of "grace," even though there happily is "the pass-

ing of non-theistic humanism' " and " 'the mounting distrust of liberal theology.' "

Whether or not President Richards would accept Wieman's characterization of him as a Barthian apostle the reviewer is in doubt. One thing is sure, Dr. Richards does not share Barth's tendency toward arrogance, and he has given us a rare volume of understanding and interpretation, greatly needed by the younger generation of our ministers—and theologians if there are any—in their contemporary confusion. One gets Barth's values best by not swallowing him whole and by retaining the values of Schleiermacher and Ritschl, and we need not accept Dr. Richards' extreme as to the irreconcilableness of these great leaders of thought. Such was the reviewer's feeling, as he concluded an evening of profoundly intellectual study, constantly illuminated by flashes of fine spiritual perception. Sympathetic interpretation is more "creative" and "clarifying" than "controversy" and at this point Richards is far apart from Karl Barth.

2. DOCTRINE IN THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

Now that the Anglican Church has, somewhat belatedly, entered into *active* interest in Christian Unity, and especially as the Archbishop of York has been accorded a large measure of leadership in the movement for an established World Council of Churches, DOCTRINE IN THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND is of deep interest. Indeed, Dr. Temple is himself the interpreter of this study in behalf of the Commission which prepared it. The spirit, he says, was not that of controversy and it avoids questions of discipline.

Dr. Temple raises a really vital question for the Faith and Order section of the incipient World Council when he emphasizes the doctrinal difference between the An-

glican and the Continental theologians, who, he says, will be "astonished" (he is undoubtedly correct) by the chief subjects of doctrine treated; it is not such a *Summa Theologiae* as they would have expected. Indeed, "the Church of England has no official philosophy." Such would, in Dr. Temple's judgment, be a *monstrum horrendum*.

The Barthians, or many of them, will more than shy at this interpreter's seeming view of the negligibility of the doctrines of the Virgin Birth and the physical resurrection of Jesus.

The Report itself begins with the Scriptures. "Inerrancy" can no longer be maintained and while the Bible, as inspired, is unique, revelation of the Holy Spirit "is to be recognized over a much wider field." Scriptural authority, the Commission says, rests on "that progressive self-revelation of God in history which culminated in Jesus Christ," the teachings of Jesus having "a special authority."

While Christians "are bound to allow very high (doctrinal) authority" to the Church, each individual may "distinguish between what he has accepted on authority only and what he has appropriated." An authorized teacher may also express personal opinions which diverge from Church doctrine, but must make his divergence clear.

The doctrine of "God and the World" recognizes revelation in nature, in history and in human experience. Barthians, again, will be partly gratified but unsatisfied at the conclusion that "nothing can be discovered by man about God apart from the revelation of himself by God to man; nor can anything be effectively revealed by God to man apart from an activity of human reason in apprehending it."

Happily for ordinary people, beliefs in "angels and

demons" have "at the very least a symbolical value," but do not call for protracted study. The discussion of miracles recognizes wide divergencies and concludes that "it is impossible in the present state of knowledge to make the same evidential use of the narratives of miracles in the Gospels which appeared possible in the past."

The doctrine of "grace," as Continentals would feel, is practically ignored. The reality of divine grace "is independent of any particular view as to the way in which this grace is mediated." Justice and love in God are witnessed in the Cross, "which reveals what sin means to God" and "also reveals God showing His love" for sinners.

"Original sin" is repudiated in its traditional sense; "that the sexual nature is necessarily or inherently sinful must be absolutely denied." The distinction between mortal and venial sin has some validity, but "the traditional distinction" "cannot be upheld." The "wrath" of God "cannot be based on self-concern" and in its purest form "cannot exist apart from love."

The redeeming Jesus "at every stage in His development" "had the perfection appropriate to that stage." The pre-existence of "the human soul of Jesus, far from being required by orthodoxy, is inconsistent with it." In short, "the fulness of the divine life revealed in Christ cannot be expressed adequately in human language." A rather strained effort is made, however, to keep Anglican doctrine in conformity with the creed of Chalcedon: "We believe ourselves to be affirming in our report that which was affirmed in the language of its time by the Council of Chalcedon," but without the metaphysic or psychology of that day.

Belief in the reality of the Incarnation is not dependent on acceptance of the Virgin Birth, and there is also

need "for critical caution to be observed" in our view of Christ's resurrection. The traditional creed uses "metaphor," which must be recognized.

The fact of the atonement is "richer than any theory" of it. The doctrine of the Trinity arose out of human experience and "has proved capable of meeting the demands" of metaphysical thought.

The Church is transcendent in human life and is universal. Its citizenship is in heaven. In the New Testament, however, its unity "is placed in the future," albeit God's purpose to achieve it is sure. Its notes are unity, holiness, catholicity and apostolicity. The effort of the Church of England is "to combine retention of the historical creeds and ministry of the Church" with recognition of "various types of Christian teaching and devotion," "within that framework." In its catholicity the Church is "supra-national" (though just how this is to be reconciled with State determinations on Church issues is not made quite clear). Apostolicity safeguards apostolic preaching and teaching by "a duly appointed order of ministers, who derive their commission in historical succession from the original apostolate."

As to the form of the ministry, however, there is not sufficient agreement among scholars to give hope of unity as to the apostolic order. Anyhow, "we no longer regard precedents, as such, as decisive for all time." But the Church preserves "the continuity of the ministry" along with the Scriptures, creeds and sacraments, as "a guarantee of its continuous identity." At the same time the Commission cannot accept a conception of ordination that makes "ministerial succession" "the essence of the Church" apart from the entire body. The Commission however is "convinced" that "the his-

toric episcopate" is "in a special sense the organ of unity and continuity."

While the Church of England "is still bound to resist the claims of the contemporary papacy," there is perhaps some possibility of "a reunion of Christendom having its centre" in "a papacy which had renounced certain of its present claims."

In the Commission's interpretation of baptism and of the Lord's Supper, after all the explanation of the visible signs of this invisible grace, the reviewer can see little reason why, in view of the recognition already given other Christian bodies, the Church of England should oppose inter-communion. In fact, a confirmed Free Churchman like the reviewer finds about everything in the sacrament that the Commission does. The Commission makes no categorical statement on the institution and allows liberty to those who do not believe that Jesus initiated any such rite. The reviewer believes also that the doctrine of the "real presence" is one on which there is deep spiritual agreement, and that the Anglican Church will come near committing the unpardonable sin if it is much longer the main obstacle to inter-communion.

The closing section of the volume is on eschatology. The doctrine of the resurrection of the body "*stands for* (reviewer's italics) an important group of truths," but "the expectation of a single great day of general resurrection considered literally," "presents great difficulties." This paragraph is illustrative of the manner in which, throughout the volume, doctrines of the traditional creeds are handled, in the effort of the Commission to hold to those traditions and at the same time show due respect to the mind of our day and generation.

As to the future of unity or "reunion," this study

seems to the reviewer to substantiate the views of those Anglicans who "look forward to union of a more federal type of constitution which would have no need of . . . a primacy." In fact, about all that is needed is the same freedom of interpretation as that evidently now allowed in the Church of England, except on the one theory of "apostolic succession"—*in the traditional Anglican and Roman Catholic sense*, but which is bound to give way to a more spiritually historical ministry of the Gospel. Perhaps the most valuable characteristic of this report is its spiritual discernment of things which have either been metaphysically conceived or traditionally conserved, or both. But, at some points at least, what is left of the tradition is remote and often hardly discernible.

3. UNITY IN FAITH AND ORDER

For nearly twenty years, representative churchmen have with faith and courage been seeking to find the bases on which to unite the Churches. In the inception of the World Conference on Faith and Order it was desired, and by some leaders hoped, that the Roman Catholic Church might be included, a dream which was soon dispelled. But the movement gradually drew into its orbit the Eastern Orthodox as well as the Protestant and near-Protestant bodies considered "evangelical." In FAITH AND ORDER, the report of the second World Conference at Edinburgh, we have a narrative with which every Christian pastor should be familiar.

The policy pursued from 1920 onward was that of conference for "understanding," by delegates appointed by the churches, confined to those "which accept our Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour." (Italics by the reviewer.) Disappointment is expressed that it

took ten years before this second conference could be called after the first at Lausanne in 1927, but the intervening period was filled with laborious and conscientious effort on the part of the latter's Continuation Committee, not just by a secretariat, but through unselfish voluntary service.

In his sermon at Edinburgh the Archbishop of York said that, by its divisiveness, the Church made apparent to the "world" the sin of division "more clearly than the holiness" of the Church and more clearly than "the unity which endures in spite of" the division. Not only is the witness to the Gospel thus obscured, but by the divisions, each Church "loses some spiritual treasure, and none perfectly represents the balance of truth." This cannot be charged to the observing "world"; "it is the so-called 'churches,' rather than any forces of the secular world, which prevent" unity. Deep regret was expressed for the new divisiveness (and this perhaps may be charged, at least partly, to the secular world) which prevented the once great German Evangelical Church from being represented at Edinburgh.

During the sessions many words of wisdom fell from the lips of delegates, as, first of all, the Conference looked at the world and its disintegration, not only in institutions, but also in "morality and religion," among races and nations which reveal the sad "perverseness of human nature" and which can never be set right by any human means. The Church is more than international, and there is comfort and hope in the very fact that the Church is persecuted; "she is at the heart of the world's struggle."

Dr. Temple, in his presidential address, reminded the Conference that there were ends in view beyond the discussion of theology. The question was: "Are our differences" to "hinder the union" of those who

hold "various views in one visible Church"? In the discussion there was a different spirit from that at Lausanne, where there were bitter and scathing observations, falling short only, perhaps, of the anathemas of the early councils of the Church.

Statements were made by representatives of different communions, "bearing witness to what the worship and life of his Church mean" to the speaker. And, on the whole, as one reads these testimonies one almost asks: Why then are they not already united? Then follows the attempt to write a report on which all may agree; on "The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ," "The Church of Christ and the Word of God," "The Church of Christ, Ministry and Sacrament"; "The Church's Unity in Life and Worship," "The Communion of Saints." The discussion on these major themes brought out clearly both the agreements and the differences of the several communions.

In the progress of ten years, while there were many events which were satisfying and promising, the one symbol which was instituted as the token of unity still remained the major obstacle: "Inter-communion has not been widely extended" and "no union has been consummated between a Church of radically 'Catholic' and one of radically 'Evangelical' traditions." The unity which has been attained "is vital, relevant to actual situations" (which would doubtless mean that the Universal Christian Council for Life and Work and the process of federation have been the main influence in unity rather than the movement for "Faith and Order"). But in reading the full report and the discussion of it, the simple-minded Christian would find the agreements on fundamentals and the disagreements on divisions which have come through human wilfulness. For example, "We all agree that Christ is truly present

in the Eucharist, though as to how that presence is manifested and realized we may differ." And "In every case churches treasure the apostolic succession in which they believe."

As one recalls the early contention of Anglicans and of Protestant Episcopal leaders that co-operative and federative unity was and would be a barrier to a deeper unity or union, it is of interest to read that "It is widely recognized that sound policies of co-operation in all spheres of Christian action have done much to facilitate the drawing together of the Christian churches." "The obstacles most difficult to overcome consist of elements of 'faith' and 'order' combined." But there are also deeply divergent conceptions of the Church itself, mainly "the contrast between 'authoritarian' and 'personal' types of Church."

However, the simple-minded Christian again would open his eyes with wonder at some of the obstructive disagreements listed.

The long-discussed problem referred to above, the supposed antithesis of federation and organic union, would seem to have been settled by the conference approval of the proposed World Council of Churches, uniting "Faith and Order" and "Life and Work." Indeed, one can hardly comprehend how Christian leaders could ever have supposed that unity in worship and service would induce wider separation at least in "faith."

At Lausanne, as has been observed, emphasis and dialectics were on the disagreements. They were, at moments, discussed as though the disputants were prepared to die for a particular tenet.¹

¹ For the reviewer's analysis of Lausanne see his *Christian Unity in Practice and Prophecy*, Macmillan, 1933.

Let us now see the agreements at Edinburgh, voted *nemine contradicente*:

“We are at one in faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the incarnate Word of God.”

This unity “is founded in Jesus Christ Himself.”

“Our unity is of heart and spirit. We are divided in the outward forms.”

“The Spirit of God has made us willing to learn from one another” and has “enriched our spiritual experience.”

“We have lifted up our hearts together in prayer; we have sung the same hymns; together we have read the same Holy Scriptures.”

“We recognize in one another” “a common Christian outlook and a common standard of values.”

And, along with a continued study of the disagreements not resolved,

“We believe that every sincere attempt to co-operate in the concerns of the Kingdom of God draws the severed communions together in increased mutual understanding and goodwill.”

The volume under review records a progress which some of us had not the faith to hope for, in its recognition of “a common Christian outlook and a common standard of values.” And we may believe that the next conference will go far beyond those at both Edinburgh in 1937 and Utrecht in 1938 in discovering what those (spiritual) values are and how they can be expressed to the simple Christian mind.

XII

THE PLACE OF THEOLOGY IN THE UNIVERSITY

William Adams Brown often reveals skill in either untying or cutting the Gordian knot. He may have done so for the World Conference on Faith and Order in *THE CASE FOR THEOLOGY IN THE UNIVERSITY*.

In this volume Professor Brown gives us about the most courageous and fundamental study that has appeared. One difference between Dr. Brown and most of his contemporary thinkers on the subject is that they claim to have elucidated the more or less particular theology needed, while he seeks a deeper re-study of theology, in a search for light rather than in the generation of heat. To a considerable extent his volume is an answer to President Robert M. Hutchins, who, like Professor Brown, finds our universities in a chaotic condition, without any unifying factor or principle. But while President Hutchins seeks this unification in metaphysics, Dr. Brown would substitute theology. In his introduction, however, President Hutchins says that, when he dismissed theology as the unifying principle, he meant "dogmatic" theology and that he would welcome a "natural" theology which would be the result of an attempt "to achieve intelligibility through metaphysics." He hopes that Dr. Brown's appreciation of genuine philosophical activity will be "taken to heart by all those who naively identify science with progress and liberty and philosophy with reaction and authority." It would thus appear that Dr. Hutchins accepts Pro-

fessor Brown's modification or completion of his own thesis.

Dr. Brown finds theology still maintained in the university "out of a decent respect for the past," but "theology as a unifying principle of life has been quietly bowed out of the university," and has "but an antiquarian interest." The modern university is doing useful and important things, but "it does not know why it is doing them," in contrast to the medieval university, whose single aim was "the acquisition of wisdom by the quest of truth in the light of faith." The author admits that it is futile to seek to unify the university by theology if we mean that term in the Barthian sense of "revelation." Nor can we reach our end by a conception of theology as "the scientific study of religion" as pursued in theological departments.

But there is another meaning to the term: "the philosophy of the Christian religion," as the effort to "use the clue which Christian faith provides to bring unity and consistency into man's thought of the universe." This is theology as the ultimate philosophy.

The medieval university got from theology "a unifying principle for thought, a unifying principle for conduct, and a synthesis of thought and conduct in a satisfying philosophy of life." There is this difference between theology and philosophy: theology has a "practical orientation" which is not the primary concern of philosophy. Theology does not simply ask, "What is God like?" but "What will he do?" Schleiermacher was the first of modern thinkers to recall theology "from its purely intellectual preoccupation with dogma to those basic religious experiences which keep it in touch with real life." Schleiermacher's two disciplines of philosophy and theology proved "fruitful for both."

Among the reasons for the loss of theology in the

university are the banishing of religion from state-supported schools, the growth of skepticism and the increase of religious denominations. And our Continental brethren may be reminded that this divisiveness came to us from the Old World. The author does not believe that there was any original intention to banish religion from education and the fact that more than half our people are professed Christians would argue that now they would not do so. But looking to the universities, Dr. Brown cites a series of fifty volumes on *The Chronicles of America* published by Yale, in which every subject in our national life is included except that of religion and the Church. At the Harvard Tercentenary sixty-three honorary degrees were given —two in theology, one of which was to a technical research scholar whom President Hutchins would not regard as a theologian at all. Among further causes for this attitude were the suspicion of theology due to the rise of denominational seminaries independent of universities, and the specialization resulting from the separation of the social sciences “from their mother—philosophy.”

The college ceased gradually to be a school of liberal arts. “What theology began” in the denominational schools, law and medicine continued. Eliot of Harvard did a great work in raising the standards of professional education, but it was “done at a cost.” “It was the break-up of an educational system controlled by a single consistent philosophy into a group of competing specialties,” so that in “more than one university one can take a Bachelor’s degree without having read a single one of the great classics or having faced one of the fundamental problems of philosophy.” And theology finds itself “listed as one among the sixty or more offerings” of a forthcoming summer school.

Professor Brown goes back to President Hutchins' case for metaphysics, and to the curricula of the theological seminaries. He reflects the reviewer's sense of the danger that the seminaries may be making a "too easy surrender to the prevailing love of empiricism and vocationalism."¹ Theology may thus also be needed as a more unifying principle in the theological schools.

For metaphysics as a philosophy divorced from theology, we must go back to the Greeks. The very reason that Plato and Aristotle are still alive is just because "it was the theologians who rediscovered Plato and Aristotle when all the rest of the world had forgotten them." "One thing metaphysics cannot do for us is to create a faith that this is a meaningful world." "The ages of philosophy have been the ages of faith." Metaphysics cannot "present us with a single system of philosophy on which all will agree." What metaphysics can do is "*to define the common assumptions which are necessary to any intelligible account of the universe.*" There are certain postulates which are not privately possessed by any particular theology: (1) That there is a moral and spiritual order which is no less real than the aspect of reality which is known to us through the senses; (2) that the divine, which is also the excellent, has been made known to us in definite and recognizable ways so that we may be sure not only that deity exists but also within limits what it is like; (3) that a trustworthy knowledge of God is made possible to man by his capacity to act upon his ideals so that, when he trusts and follows that which is most excellent he is in communion with the deity.

Theology has not always been true to this deep faith. Dismayed by the apostasies of man, it has despaired of any knowledge and taken refuge "in a doctrine of

¹ See the reviewer's *Contemporary Christian Thought*, p. 18 ff.

revelation which in its ultimate skepticism does not differ from the agnosticism of the scientists." Such is the Barthian theology to-day. In theology we have a philosophy qualified to give the unity needed by the university because of "two factors which non-theological metaphysics lacks: (1) Contact with a body of concrete facts which give it a specific subject matter and (2) a tradition long and many-sided enough to furnish a point of contact with the variety of interests" for which the university must make provision.

Theology, Professor Brown continues, presents a subject matter dealing with the profoundest questions, "not simply as subjects of speculation," but "as living realities"—"in the context of religion." If man is right in believing that he finds ultimate reality in religion, this matters supremely. If he is wrong he ought to know it. "This central issue the modern university systematically ignores," while with it "any metaphysics worthy the name must come to grips." Metaphysics also has its postulates: a rational order, man's capacity to understand that order, and that scientific method is the way of securing trustworthy knowledge of it.

Metaphysics differs from science. "Science deals with the aspects of truth in which exact verification is possible by laboratory methods, and hence one can be content to take one's answers at second-hand; philosophy deals with the kind of questions that, because they appeal to faith and involve ultimate judgments of value, everyone must answer for himself." "Here," says Professor Brown, "there are only three possibilities open to us": to go it blind, or to submit to some authority and relieve ourselves of responsibility, or to sit at the feet of profound thinkers and learn. Some would call the latter "'philosophy'"; Dr. Hutchins calls it "'metaphysics'"; Dr. Brown calls it "'theology.'"

This concept of theology differs from non-theological metaphysics by its connection with a particular historical tradition. Experiences of God, while individual and distinctive, "are yet so much of a kind" that those who have them "recognize one another" as belonging to one fellowship, and thus we have the "'Church,'" a society with "a conviction of divine mission which separates it from all other institutions"—albeit the university historian may just see it as one of many. Theology is supremely concerned with this institution, which brings pattern and plan into man's complicated life. But "*he would be a trustful soul who would look to the study of history as it is taught in the university to-day for such a pattern.*" (Italics by the reviewer.) By way of example, the author suggests that unity in the study of history might be found in the Christian faith, in a dominating purpose, conceived in many lights, in the history of the Christian religion.

A far-reaching difference between metaphysics and theology is in the differing symbols. Those of metaphysics are mainly abstractions, those of theology are drawn from the common life of man. Theology approaches the study of ultimate reality through religious experience. "This contrast between the individual and the general lies at the root of the . . . question of the relation of nature and the supernatural." "Natural theology deals with the universal," "revealed theology with those exceptional insights and experiences" through which the universal is discovered.

Dr. Brown believes that one point in theology would especially help the university to achieve unity, namely, the experience of worship, which "furnishes the best introduction" to the perplexing metaphysical problem of the relation of philosophy to art. Why not, he asks, a study of the great Christian hymns in courses in

classics? Why not a study of worship as it affects the life of the race and as "an essential part" of the education "of cultivated men?"

That the symbolism of theology is especially needed is evidenced by "the experience of the new philosophies" which are claiming the attention of men. We have the symbols of the Mikado, Hitler and Mussolini "as a sort of secular substitute for the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation."

And if we restore the old-time alliance between theology and metaphysics, it makes little difference which term we use. Professor Brown's experience is that of most of us who are in touch with universities when he says: "*I sometimes wonder whether in all the areas of our national life there is so widespread an ignorance of what is happening in contemporary religion as in the faculties of our great universities.*" (Italics by reviewer.)

Such teachers, however, have much more at their disposal than they realize. There is a renewed interest in religion, revealed in the Federal Council's preaching mission, in an increasing number of religious books, and even in the theatre, and "a more trustworthy indication of public interest is the radio." To be sure, it is largely unintelligent, untheological and uninstitutional. But we have denominationalism giving way to understanding and co-operation. Men are asking why the banishing of sectarianism in public education should involve neglect of religion. Rigid orthodoxy is breaking down.

In university circles themselves there is a conviction that we have carried specialization too far and that this calls for "a unifying philosophy." "If democratic civilization" is to survive, we must have a philosophy "born of faith," and "which is in fact," "and is not

ashamed to call itself religious—in other words, a theology.” “It is because the democratic countries have so largely lost their faith in the divine dignity and calling of man” that they cannot meet the attack of the new totalitarian philosophies and gospels. Leading intellectuals are beginning to see it, and President Seymour of Yale points out “the connection between the freedom of thought which is essential” to the university and its traditional religious basis.

How shall theology be restored? It must be as a philosophy, ready to meet the tests of science. It must help students to differentiate between the unimportant and the important, the latter being above all “the convictions by which men live.” It cannot be done in the liberal once-Christian universities “through any single authoritative theology.” We have the leaders, but they are working independently and need to be constructively associated. Let the universities not be disturbed because disillusioned theologians “are turning to authoritarian religion—Barthian or Anglo-Catholic, as the case may be.” They can find theologians seeking and contending for “a rational faith.”

Professor Brown sees emerging “a truly ecumenical theology” in the recent conferences at Oxford and Edinburgh. They were ecumenical in a range of interest that covers all human life, including the political, economic and cultural interests of the day. In Germany, while university, press, labor and political parties all have yielded up their freedom, “the Church alone stands firm” for freedom, not only for itself, “but for man as man.” The author sees theologies giving way to this ecumenical theology. By this he does not mean a single authoritative theology, but that we have “a new universe of discourse.” The reason so few students for the Ph.D. degree now major in philosophy is

that the university philosophers have had too much of the "trade interest" and the "game interest," over-specialization and the interest of doing a thing to see how well one can do it. Let philosophy again take its responsibility to religion seriously and it will have students.

One of these philosophies is the Christian, another is the Indian, the third is in the rival forms of Communism and Nationalism, demanding the surrender of personal freedom. And if man is no more than a part of nature, why should not Hitler, Mussolini and Stalin use them as they do? It is worth while, at this point, to see whether or not the Christian philosophy is right.

Such a synthetic philosophy, supplied by theology, as Dr. Brown would introduce, would be the organizing centre of the university and would involve changes in the departments of the university. History would include missions and Christian unity. Classics would not have Latin as a dead language, but one in which teaching and worship are to-day conducted. In psychology religion would not be identified with superstition. In sociology the Church would be a social institution. Art and worship would be complementary. Such a unification would affect not only the theological department, but those of law and medicine. Professor Brown's implications are sweeping in extent.

If there is any book of one hundred and twenty-five pages that has condensed more of wisdom and prophecy than this one during the half century of my ministry, it has failed to come my way. Some university president has an unparalleled opportunity. The Faith and Order section of the proposed World Council of the Churches has a field here for study.²

² See pages 213 and 231.

XIII

A SYNTHESIS OF CONTEMPORARY THOUGHT

I

In the first volume of this series (*Contemporary Christian Thought*), attention was called to the wide difference between theological discussion a half century ago and that of to-day. It was once fairly easy to define the "Old Theology" and the "New Theology." Not so to-day. Except for the contemporary antithesis between the Barthian school and the thought of theologians who react against it, there were no clear-cut distinctions and no "systems" of theology, no Calvinism and Arminianism.

There was almost nothing constructive in the theological studies reviewed. Writers did little more than stand on the corner crying, "fire," and they were very vague in their proposals of measures for extinguishing the conflagration. Its causation was due not only to sin, the "world," and the heart of man; the "Church" was the incendiary; it had, through "Liberalism" and "Modernism" and its interest in the "social order" relied solely on man and his creative genius; had accepted the "scientific view," and had conformed to the "culture" of the age. One of the younger writers extolled the high ideals of Communism, in contrast to which "the Church appeared drab and colorless, if not socially useless." Another brilliant thinker followed Reinhold Niebuhr in going "politically to the left, theologically to the right" in sympathy "with Christian orthodoxy on the one hand and with social radicalism on the

other." He saw, and most of the other younger men witnessed "no great hope in any of the well-recognized schools of theology." Theology must be revised and its present forms reversed, by a new theology, generally more or less along near-Barthian lines. At that moment it looked as though European Continental theology might be infused into the thinking of the younger generation.

In the second volume (*Trends of Christian Thinking*), other voices were heard, with somewhat different tenor. Two professors of the philosophy of religion gave us a study, in which one of them evoked a naturalistic religion. Some writers, going deeper than those discussed above, looked, not for a return to traditional theology—still less to orthodoxy—but saw the emergence of a new supernaturalism which would bridge the gulf between it and naturalism. One previously iconoclastic professor of theology sought to connect his theory of realistic theology with the true liberalism of the past. Recalling that the pendulum has a habit of swinging both ways, and that there is a centre of gravity, such writers hesitated to go all the way.

At the same time appeared new writers who almost out-Barthed Barth. Meanwhile, the one-time disciples of this great leader divided from him and among themselves, due to the fact that when men are in a state of disillusionment they become individualistically anomalous. Ritschl and Schleiermacher, who were dead and had been buried, according to the dialectical theologians, came to life by the resuscitating skill of brilliant interpreters of the valid empirical views of these theologians of one-time Germany. Personalism found a worthy successor to Borden P. Bowne, who gave us a view which has been illuminated in the present volume by Nicolas Berdyaev.

And a guide appeared for younger thinkers in the rich experience and thinking of an octogenarian teacher and leader in Foreign Missions who revealed the qualities of philosopher, scientific thinker, mystic and ethical intuitionist, able to validate the permanent elements in traditional Christianity while also depreciating its adaptation to the moods of a particular age, whether by liberals or by dialectical theologians. This profound and simple teacher was a guide for younger men.¹

The challenge to Social Christianity was met with earnestness and valour, and it should be added with persuasiveness. There were writers, including a young Roman Catholic professor, who saw in this day of crisis, not the need of a repudiation of the Social Gospel, but the absolute necessity for more of it.

In this seeming *chiaroscuro* there were certain clear-cut convictions mutually shared by all the writers studied. The main and cross currents all swept away from "Humanism" and "Rationalism," using these terms in their meaning as dependent factors in thinking. There was a general need of the renascence of theology to meet both these evils. The older themes of discussion: Atonement, Christology, Miracle, Biblical Inspiration, Eschatology no longer stood out. God and Man were the main subjects, in their mutual relations, provided they had any such relations, which some writers doubted.

II

In comparison and contrast with these trends of Christian thinking, we may now attempt a review and, if it is not too immodest, a synthesis of the studies in this volume. As previously indicated, Professor Mackintosh, mediating between Barth and Ritschl, finds its swiftness of movement to be the main fea-

¹ He should for this reason be named: Edward C. Moore.

ture in modern theology, but at the same time reveals what Etienne Gilson implies, the need of "a philosophical history of philosophy," which, in his judgment, will reveal a unity in the experience of philosophical knowledge.² And there is perhaps some promise of ultimate coherent, Christian thinking in Horton's hope that the optimism of Anglo-Saxon thought may be tempered, while Continental thinkers are led to a patient activism, to meet the needs of a day of crisis.

How far Professor Sasse represents German Lutheran thought at the moment it would be hard to estimate. If he does, to any appreciable degree, we would seem to be back in Marburg with Luther and Zwingli, leaving the World Conference on Faith and Order at an impasse. But what may yet appear in theological Germany, among such theologians as Karl Heim³ we have little means of prophesying.

Nicolas Berdyaev goes a long way in extricating, by philosophy, those who have been caught in the dilemma created by Barth in his theory of Transcendence and Immanence. If this be true, Berdyaev may yet see fulfilled his promise of a renewal of the once seemingly obvious mutual relation between philosophy and theology, which William Adams Brown appears to assume. After reading this chapter I took down *The Philosophical Basis of Theism* by my teacher of a half-century ago, Samuel Harris. While I should have to seek to avoid his undertone of Calvinism, I said: "I wonder if the theological students of to-day are getting anything as stimulating as this, whatever may be the

² *The Unity of Philosophical Experience*, Etienne Gilson, Scribners, 1937. Gilson says that unless, in accord with Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, we have such a history, revealing some intrinsic intelligibility, the endless chain of mutually destructive systems that runs from Thales to Karl Marx is less suggestive of hope than of discouragement.

³ See an estimate of Heim in *Trends of Christian Thinking*.

modification." And this is regardless of Brunner's charge that each system of philosophy contradicts all the others, in the ready acceptance of David Cairns' obvious judgment that much "remains to be done before this great subject of the nature of general and special revelation is adequately understood," even by Emil Brunner, whose "theology is too complete for a man of his age." Berdyaev reflects the inevitability of systemization in philosophy and also the inextricable mazes of metaphysics that can be employed to demonstrate the simplest conclusions of human experience.

No one better than Principal Micklem has shown the theological struggle that is taking place to-day on the part of men who have reacted from an earlier liberalism so-called.

Hendrik Kraemer's definitions of "faith" and revelation are hard to adjust to his assumption that empirical Christianity and historical Christianity are to be set aside, and it is difficult to see how his volume can become the basis of missionary theology. But the correspondence appended to Kraemer's study will perhaps sufficiently give my estimate of a great volume which falls short by its evident influence from the authoritarian dialectical technique. That Kraemer's view of the revelation of God outside Christianity will not be shared by American missionary leaders is indicated by the study of Hugh Vernon White's volume.⁴

Professor Dickie takes us part way toward some sort of approach to a synthesis between Continental and—let us say—Scottish, theology. His analyses of Barth and Heim are of especial interest because they reveal the incoherence of what we have come to call the Continental theology. Niebuhr, in a different way, does somewhat the same valuable thing for us. Reason and

⁴ See page 111 ff.

faith are reconciled in that reason is an act of faith and faith itself is reasonable. The denial of human capacity and ability for insight is like putting out men's eyes and then asking them to see something.

Adolf Keller moves somewhat in the same direction as Dickie, but by lifting the whole Christian movement to the spiritual level needed for the consummation of the new World Council of Churches.

III

And now we come to other quieter, but it may be more penetrating voices than those more particularly heard in the two previous volumes of this series. Alfred E. Garvie is a striking example of the older men, of mature and ripe thinking, who have not been terror-stricken in a world of sin and crisis. They do not share the sense of disillusionment that has taken possession of younger men, just because they never were illusioned by their own modernism, liberalism and social vision. They did not yield to the dogmatism of science, nor trust implicitly in its or any other culture. They find that, through the ages God's increasing purpose runs, even when the age is that of a backward cycle in moral evolution. Canon Barry likewise rests the case for Christianity on God's purpose for the world, to be proclaimed by the Church without moral ambiguity and by standards in its own life. Dean W. R. Mathews does not hesitate to restate the teleological theory of the universe, illustrated in history, which discloses direction.

Principal Cairns distinguishes, as so many "crisis" writers do not, between the scientific method and the dogma of science which Berdyaev told us had shackled philosophy. The scientific method itself precludes science as an adequate interpretation of either human life or nature. Here is a volume which will be of great

help to our younger ministers, whether liberal and modern or conservative; whether with fixed convictions or feeling about for such; whether confused and misled by either the views of Lippmann, Dewey, Huxley, or Krutch on the one hand, or by Barth, Brunner, or Kierkegaard on the other. To no slight degree, Dr. Cairns has brought into compass the values of both the devotees of science and the exponents of the dialectical theology, with many of the needed correctives for both. He goes some distance towards disarming both those who make a god of science and those who dialectically renounce the knowledge and the capacity which are the gift of God to man.

According to Professor Skinner, Liberalism once wrested power from dictators and integrated man with the world and other men, in freedom. It developed weaknesses, but the implication is that, with correctives for itself, it can do this with contemporary autocracy. Indeed, in this volume, although it does not quite say so, a revived Liberalism is proclaimed as just the force to meet the crisis of the day.

Whether or not Dr. White's "liberal Christianity" would be included in the Liberalism repudiated by those who use the term in scorn and satire, we may not be sure, because the violent diatribes against Liberalism seldom stop to discriminate. Dr. White probably represents the thinking of the majority of so-called liberals, excluding the pure humanists. In fact, he undoubtedly characterizes the great majority of the so-called Christian liberals of the past fifty years when he says that true liberals hold to a humanism whose divine ideals are in Christ and that the Liberalism which has broken down was one of self-originated ideals. Liberalism was right in method, all that is

needed is to exchange the egotism of the reformer for the passion of the prophet.

We have two authors who neither repudiate Humanism nor accept it as it is conceived when the term is applied to a school of thought. Both Hartshorne and Maritain envisage a true Humanism, but how differently? Professor Hartshorne sees a new integration of knowledge to do for our age what Thomism did for the middle ages, in his "theistic naturalism" or "naturalistic theism." If I understand Hartshorne his "superhuman being"—or God—is the sum total of nature, "the living divinity which . . . is nature." Humanism was really the result of the otherworldliness of Christian teaching. What an extreme to that of Maritain and his transcendent philosophy of integral humanism, whose study belongs as much in our chapter on social Christianity as it does where it is placed. Maritain is probably the most typical example of liberal Catholicism.

It is strange that so many theologians overlook Mysticism, when they do not treat it as a mere psychological phenomenon. And yet, at the same time, when they reach an impasse in their thinking they turn mystic until they get by. Dr. Hughes has given a belated tribute to the part of Mysticism in history and Rufus Jones shows us how barren theology is without moments of "high visibility" in which we have revelations beyond the sight of Reason.

The man who was born blind, when he was interrogated by hecklers, confessed ignorance as to who or what Jesus was. But one thing he knew, that whereas once blind, he now could see. The ordinary Christian will always be that man. And while I suspect that church historians will contradict me, Hopwood has at least brought out the characteristics of the disciples

which did most to convince them that Jesus Christ was their Redeemer, in that He was a response to what Haydon calls "man's search for the good life."

As has been observed, those exponents of the Social Gospel who accept Haydon's philosophy as revealing *one* of man's valid objectives persist in urging that gospel as the very need of the Church which other "crisis" thinkers declare to have been the world's undoing. Plowright is not altogether apart from Maritain in his view of the philosophies that now rule so large a part of the world.

Josiah Stamp has rendered a service in giving our laymen of power the approach to a Christian view of their task and opportunity, and to our preachers a wise method of preaching their Social Gospel. Fursey, like Maritain, goes beyond Stamp in lifting practical sociology to a transcendent level by his blending of social and spiritual vision.

There would seem to be no little contradiction between what rigid theologians would consider the antinomianism of the Anglican report on doctrine and the earnest effort of the World Conference on Faith and Order to preserve tradition—even the traditions of historically diverse communions. All our writers would agree that our want of Christian unity has made Christian institutions weak in their efforts to cope with crisis. President Richards urges us, in seeking to resolve our differences, to accept the best of both the traditional past and the realistic present, blending the choicest in what seem to be antinomies, for the sake of the humanity which suffers from the strife of our generation.

IV

In the endeavour to sustain the title of this chapter, so far as that may be possible, let us review some of the

trends or emphases found to be more or less common among the diversities and divisions in these studies. In contrast to the theological discussion of a half century ago, we again, as in the previous volumes in this series, miss many of the themes which were then the high points of disputation: The Atonement; Historical Criticism—this right is assumed; Christology—there is little or no attempt to confine Christ in humanistic categories. Contemporary thought is little concerned to discuss the doctrine of the Trinity except by implication. Thus there continues a quite different orientation from that of the Old and New Theology in the nineteenth century; there are no two distinct opposing tendencies. It would be difficult to-day to tell who the heretics would be. There are, however, some main currents. There is a search for a theology to meet the regnant philosophies of life which are leading the world astray, a theology that will restore true freedom.

The modern theologian must know his world and restudy history to find its path. There is more or less general prophecy that this age is an age between ages. There must be a break with contemporary civilization. A faith which is to conquer must become a "cause" to which men will commit their very souls. The immediate moment is itself a day of judgment. While some would break with the social and political order, others tell us that Christianity can never be preserved if that order is turned over to a state that holds itself to be "above good and evil." An outstanding feature of modern thinking is this new note of realism.

The devastating forces of the age just passing are the result of a sweeping tide of secularism and materialism. Spiritual values have been submerged. There is thus general assumption that civilization has been wrecked by the lapse of Christianity. There is an in-

creasing consensus in the depreciation of Rationalism and of Humanism in the meaning of those terms as distinct philosophies of life and history. Among all but the extreme "crisis" thinkers there is frankly developing a new Humanism at the moment when men are proclaiming judgment on the Church and Christian society for the surrender to humanistic philosophies.

Our reliance—or over-reliance—on Science, and its evident results have led to a search for a new Revelation, for an impartation of light and truth that, however unified the moral universe may be, is of a difference in degree from any other form, so great that it becomes a difference in kind. With many this has induced a new conception of evolution, not simply progressive and cyclic, but an "emergent" evolution—God breaking into this age between ages. We have already noted how this has led to a renewed study of, and often faith in, the supernatural. There is less and less tendency to deny the reality of the supernatural, but this term is explained or interpreted in a variety of ways, often in the manner of a neo-supernaturalism which is in accord with a true naturalism. Indeed, while there is no little "other worldliness" in these studies, it is one which is quite different from what that term once implied. Even naturalists seem to find it necessary to make some place for supernaturalism.

As in previous volumes, the outstanding theme is a theology of anthropology—God and Man, Holiness and Sin.

Outside the more extreme thinkers of more or less Barthian type and its often confused followers, there appears little tendency to set social Christianity and personal religion over against one another. Indeed, in the "Existential" theology the Social Gospel bulks largely by implication. With its originator, Kierkegaard, this

theory implies theological application to crucial occasions and catastrophes in social life. Experiences which summon the gathering of one's whole strength demand a critical decision which will remake human character and the social order. In a sense, even Barthians are proclaiming a Social Gospel. Any semblance of a Social Gospel must be lifted into the life of the Infinite and the Eternal.

It is difficult to see any place for human freedom in relation to the "wholly-other" God of Continental thinking. Perhaps largely as a reaction to this, we have a new philosophy for the social crisis which not only puts a new emphasis on freedom but lifts it, as do both Berdyaev and Garvie, to the transcendent concept of "creative freedom."

The various turns which theological thought is taking are giving new meaning or emphasis to a Christ in whom eternity breaks into time. There is a new interpretation of history as timeless. Jesus Christ is the norm or the culmination of this history. He is past, present and future. The eschatological strain of thought is not a doctrine of last things which is content with pre-millennialism, awaiting a long deferred second coming, except perhaps by those who say we are on the verge of it. It is a philosophical tendency to lift all history out of time into eternity. As we have seen, with many such writers, Christ dominates this eternalized history.

The Church, while subjected to violent, and often extravagant criticism, is magnified. A new and majestic conception of the Church, with some, involves its existence in eternity. It is not just a society of believers, a spiritual collectivism. It has an eternal history, is a movement of life in the moral universe, or is itself an emergent in evolution.

Such are some of the components which may be entering into a new theology, and which are often shared by thinkers of opposing schools, so far as there are any such schools. While thus no such theology for our day has become coherent, we have not a few indications of what it may be when men have gone further in thinking their way through the collapse of our contemporary civilization and culture. At this point it is impossible for one to maintain complete subjectivity. I do not believe that it will eventuate from those theologians who are most dialectical, who glory in paradoxes often of their own construction, who rejoice in antitheses and with whom anything like synthesis is a sin against the Holy Ghost. Principal Cairns, in his analysis of Barth and Brunner, brings out what we may term the unreliability or instability of these brilliant men. They first establish premise and conclusion, discard any and all thought that does not fit in between the two and proclaim the result to be final truth. Once they both held the concept of the Virgin Birth in common as a *credo*. As they verge from one another on major elements of dialectic, one finds that this is a doctrine vital to that of the Incarnation, and retains it as an object of faith; the other discovers that it does not furnish evidence for his conclusion and proves that it disproves just what his one-time associate claims that it confirms. I do not think that the light we seek in theology will come from this way of constructing schemes of salvation.

V

We may be happy, then, that in this volume we have studies by thinkers with a different technique, like Cairns, who finds it possible to distinguish between the good and the evil in the doctrines of science. Light will come especially from those who are seeking to

resolve the dialectical contradiction between Transcendence and Immanence. This enlightenment seems to be breaking in from England and Scotland, through American publishers, rather more than from our own thinkers.

William Adams Brown has made one of the greatest contributions to our problem and to Christian unity, in his case for theology as the unifying principle of higher education—*theology as an endless study*. It is amply evident that he does not desire to have our universities theologically labeled as our schools of theology have been at times.⁵

Several years ago the hope was expressed that "Faith and Order" and "Life and Work" would unite and that the World Conference on Faith and Order would become a study and conference group of the Universal Christian Council for Life and Work.⁶ It is gratifying to have this policy followed, as it is in our own Federal Council, with its Commission for the Study of Christian Unity. And it may now be hoped that the proposed World Council will realize that the search for adequate intellectual form for Christian truth and faith cannot be spiritually enlightening until it is pursued by a united Christian body, meanwhile experiencing and expressing to the world, in oneness, that truth and faith in devotion, worship and service. To return to our simple-minded Christian once more, he would have seen the path in the original message issued at Lausanne. And we may hope that the unbiblical metaphysical concept used in what we trust was the temporary constitution of the World Council may be brought into accord

⁵ There appears to be a new and regrettable tendency to-day to revive the identification of theological seminaries with particular systems of thought, more particularly with Barthian—if that can be called a system.

⁶ See *Christian Unity in Practice and Prophecy*, Charles S. Macfarland, Macmillan, 1933.

with the spiritual teaching of Jesus as to Himself. At least there will be interpretation of what is meant by it in terms which may be comprehended by Christians who are neither metaphysicians, nor philosophers, nor theologians. Indeed, one sometimes fears that the ecumenical movement may be getting too much into the hands of theologians. It will be especially unhappy if such leaders have theological views that are too finally or completely determined.

Perhaps there is satisfaction in that one discovers little sign of denominational theologies. We have Methodist writers complacently going over, via Barth, to at least an approach to Calvinistic Whitefield rather than to Arminian Wesley. And the recent Presbyterian Assembly appeared to be more than doubtful about whatever may be the neo-Calvinism appearing in its midst.

As one studies the previous chapters in the light of effort to formulate "systems" of thought they may seem impossible of synthesis, although they all seek the same end, deliverance from this day of world catastrophes. But let the reader go back over them and he will find in at least nearly all of them approaches to obvious ultimate truth and reality. Indeed, if Berdyaev is right, and if I interpret him understandingly, if intuition is the *sine qua non* of philosophy, if the Ego is the foundation of philosophy, and true philosophy is personalist, we have as many philosophies as we have cognitive beings. And this is not a disparagement of philosophy, much less theology, nor am I seeking some irreducible minimum of faith for unity. "Let knowledge grow from more to more."

In the volume on the Church of England, the Archbishop of York characterized an effort at a *Summa Theologiae* as a *monstrum horrendum*. While that is extravagant hyperbole, he surely reached the heart of

the matter when he said that in their disunity the churches not only obscure the Gospel, but that "each Church loses some spiritual treasure and none perfectly represents the balance of truth." That is about the way I have come to read all the volumes that come to me from week to week. And I close all of them with the observation: *Ultima Thule?* Not yet.

VI

So the closing attempt to indicate how we may pursue these studies with a view to synthesis would be in these words:

"All are but broken lights of Thee;
And thou, O Lord, art more than they."

In his first lecture on *Das Wesen des Christentums* to all the faculties at Berlin while I was a student, in 1899, the great scholar of the Germany that then was, Adolf Harnack, after telling what judgments one might reach in a study of history, closed with these pregnant words:

"Solche schafft immer nur die Empfindung und der Wille; sie sind eine subjektive That. Die Verwechslung, als könnte die Erkenntnis sie erzeugen, stammt aus jener langen, langen Epoche, in der man vom Wissen und der Wissenschaft alles erwartete, in der man glaubte, man könne diese so ausdehnen, dass sie alle Bedürfnisse des Geistes und Herzens umspannt und befriedigt. Das vermag sie nicht. Zentner-schwer fällt diese Einsicht in manchen Stunden heißer Arbeit auf unsere Seele, und doch—wie verzweifelt stünde es um die Menschheit, wenn der höhere Friede, nach dem sie verlangt, und die Klarheit, Sicherheit und Kraft, um die sie ringt, abhängig wären von dem Masse des Wissens und der Erkenntnis!"

The profounder question is not, when the Son of Man cometh, will he find *the* faith? Edward C. Moore⁷ says that things take possession of us by intuition which it "may be impossible to express in the manner of rationalization." "Yet such faith—call it courage, what you will—is the only entrance upon the course by which these things can be proved—or—alternately disproved." All of our intellectual conceptions, he says, are relative, and must not be considered absolutes. And these are the conclusions of a theologian of theologians.

As we thus seek harmony,

Let "more of reverence in us dwell,
That heart and soul according well,
May make one music as before,
But vaster."

If the reader, for the moment, will share this mood, let us see if we may catch the deepest note of unity in these studies. It appears in many of them. It is when they fall into the mood of intellectual humility. Of some things they are ready to utter Barth's "yea, yea" and "nay, nay." But again and again, they pause for relief, seeking to receive the Kingdom of Heaven as a little child and find their only answer by entering into it in simplicity. Then it is that they have their moments of what Rufus Jones calls "high visibility."

Adolf Keller, after characterizing the profundity of the discussions at Oxford and Edinburgh, concludes that our need is less that of organization or theology; it is that of Christian witness, not just the thought of those whom he calls our "best thinkers." He tells us that in these great assemblies, it was in our worship that we "opened a new way toward each other" as our theological thinking had failed to do. "The appeal

⁷ *The Nature of Religion*, Edward C. Moore, Macmillan, 1936.

from theological thinking to the power and tribunal of the Holy Spirit prepared an understanding where theological discussion failed." Referring to what he calls "the theological despair of Edinburgh," he says that the deepest spiritual experience found its expression in *Veni Creator Spiritus*.

Alfred E. Garvie, discussing revelation, tells us that it is most fully expressed in worship. Dean W. R. Matthews, after no little rationalization, ends by applying to himself the words which came to Job out of the whirlwind. So great a philosopher and theologian as William E. Hocking finds a substantial basis for religion less in the intellect and more in feeling.

I care not how profound the reader may be, he will be touched to the depths of his very being in the study of mysticism by Principal Hughes, in which he finds that the knowledge of God is intuition and that man comes nearest to God in his knowledge when he has the same kind of knowledge as that of the Infinite. Turning to a Roman Catholic writer, Furfey finds that faith is a supernatural manner of attaining knowledge itself. President Richards, in the midst of all his erudition in his study of creative controversies, concludes that Jesus would not have understood any of our terms and creeds, even including that of Chalcedon on which the English archbishops rather feebly attempt to base faith for their people. He drops for the moment his metaphysics, and finds faith as a divine act in man who reaches highest when he has "the mind of Christ." He concludes by admitting that "reason cannot comprehend" the unsearchable riches of revelation.

Even Principal Micklem, the title of whose study intimates assurance, more than once, without reaching a conclusion, ends by telling us that what he is exploring is an "unfathomable mystery." After seeking to

determine what *the* faith is, he ends by telling us that it is not a theory or a philosophy.

This spirit of submissiveness is increasingly shared by the most modern scientists, a fact which is strangely overlooked or ignored by the "crisis" theologians who lay the ills of the world and the Church to "science" and the scientific method. The latest example of this modern mood of scientists is Professor George D. Birkhoff, former president of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. He says: "In the daring effort of the scientist to extend knowledge as far as possible, there arises an aura of faith . . . which furnishes the most powerful incentive and is the best guide to further progress." He declares that "intuition, reason and faith" play interdependent roles. "Faith" embraces points of view which were above those of reason. "Reality" must be accorded to the knowledge gained by faith and intuition, equally with that acquired by reason. This faith of Professor Birkhoff, he admits, is not strictly demonstrable. He tells us that although all attempts to build a bridge to link the stars and the atoms have failed, he has faith that there is such a bridge, and he finds value in beliefs "which seem the inevitable accompaniment of all creative thought."⁷

James Martineau once asked; "What then is it that sustains the *summit-minds*? Do they stand upon the earth as creative gods, with lordly mien and will that is all their own? Do they stoop with the pity of a superior to the subject crowd beneath? Or do you see them with still uplifted face, and bending low before a Holiest of all? nay, with the very light that most transfigures them glistening through the streaming tears of a tender penitence? Is not their calm, their strength,

⁷ From the *New York Times*, December 28, 1938.

their fearlessness, more than any man's free from self-assertion, and an expression of pure dependence and perfect trust?"⁸

Thus do our authors often reach the conclusion that "authority, in its true conception, is, and can be no other than relative," as they discover that "methods naturally designed to lead men to faith . . . have become the first objects of faith." "Theology . . . repeats with ever deeper conviction and sincerity the apostle's word: 'We know in part.' " "It is carrying on a work which needs long generations of workmen." "It is never other than tentative."⁹

Auguste Sabatier closed his *magnum opus* with this soliloquy: "At the close of this long effort of research and meditation, I am not exempt from a certain lassitude of mind and heart; and I lay down the pen with the prayer of our old Corneille:

'O God of truth, whom only I desire,
Bind me to thee by ties as strong as sweet;
I tire of hearing, of reading too I tire,
But not of saying, Thee, God, alone I need. ' "

While thus, at first, it would appear that contemporary theologians are raising more problems than they solve, this common consciousness, so far as it is common, of the wide disparity between what mind can comprehend and what may be possessed and spiritually discerned through man's longing for the things of the Spirit, may have its lesson for those who seek the way of unity.

"In the last sacred hours of the Master's life with His disciples, he gave them a very *simple* sacrament, an acted parable of human service and assured them of a Holy Spirit to guide their hearts and lives.

⁸ *The Seat of Authority in Religion.*

⁹ *Religions of Authority*, Auguste Sabatier.

“Later on, when the disciples on one occasion found difficulty in administration, they called together the multitude of their associates and selected ‘seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom’ for a special task. The rest gave themselves in the meantime ‘to prayer and to the ministry of the word.’ Perhaps if we should cease our larger discussional conferences for a while, get all Christians to give themselves to prayer and ministry, selecting seven, or, if need be, seventy-seven men (and women) to go apart and spend the days and hours of their communion in worship, prayer, and the exchange of Christian experience and in solicitous consideration of a needy waiting world, its struggles and its sorrows, we might emerge from our confusion. They could make the beatitudes and the twelfth and thirteenth chapters of First Corinthians, without any need of commentaries, their daily subject of thought and conversation. Let them gather, not in a hotel, but in a church. They might not come back to us with the finished institutional product, but they could once more start us all on the road together.

“These seven or more, however learned, however practical, must, above all be men and women of very simple personal faith in God, in Jesus Christ, in his Church and in human nature. We have them, world-wide, and the writer could easily name some of them. Meanwhile, instead of further debate, let the rest of the Church not fail to give themselves to constant prayer. Perhaps, as at Pentecost, they might show us how to speak to the world our common message in such manner that ‘every man’ could hear us speak ‘in his own language.’ The unity of the Church might be found in *Christian experience, worship and service.*”¹⁰

¹⁰ From *Christian Unity in Practice and Prophecy*, Charles S. Macfarland, Macmillan, 1933.

Thus, after all, we may find the synthesis attempted in this chapter, through our own profoundest experience, when we are at our highest and our best, in something that takes us beyond our minds, even at their best. I venture to say that there are times, in the midst of our finest temper of intellect, when we all have this mood:

“Here let us pause, our quest forego,
Enough for us to feel and know
That He in whom the cause and end,
The past and future meet and blend,
Speaks not alone the words of fate
Which worlds destroy and worlds create ;
But whispers in my spirit’s ear
In tones of love, or warning fear,
A language none beside may hear.
To Him from wanderings long and wild
I come, an overwearied child.”

Shall we not share the experience of the traveller climbing the ascent of an Alpine road, pausing now and again at the wayside shrine for rest and worship —*but then once again pursuing his way*—as we seek the Faith in the spirit of faith? Only in this spirit shall we find our way to a World Council of the Churches. “He went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.” “And when it was day . . . He came down . . . and stood in the plain . . . there went virtue out of Him, and healed them all.” Thus did the Redeemer of mankind, the “Summit Mind” of history, sustain His faith in a day of crisis.

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